

these slides and films as the 64-year-old William Hamilton of Hamilton's Excursions, a long-established travelling show whose painted panoramas of the world had been brought up to date with films and variety acts, including acrobats and a ventriloquist. This 'factory gate' film was one of the lead items in Hamilton's advertising for his twenty-eighth visit to Preston in October 1901, and was mentioned by the local paper, along with the type of projector he was using:

*At intervals several capital variety turns are introduced, and the Eragraph is responsible for some good examples of living picture work, including an interesting picture of the workpeople of Messrs. Horrockses, Crewdson, and Co. leaving the mill.<sup>4</sup>*

The film turn in Hamilton's show would have been booked by him, but run independently, like his other acts. When the film showman at one of the Hamilton family's other panorama shows left to go abroad in 1898, he sold his 'Cinematograph, together with ten films' for £20, and the show advertised for another 'Picture Worker' to join it on tour.<sup>5</sup> These ten slides may indicate that William Hamilton's projectionist had a similar number of films. His 'Eragraph' projector had been launched in 1897, and was popular with travelling showmen, but it, like the Cinematograph, was becoming out of date by 1901.<sup>6</sup>

A similar slide in the set announcing film of 'EMPLOYEES LEAVING THE WORKS OF MESSRS. J. MUSGRAVE & SONS LTD., KAY STREET, BOLTON' is another record of Hamilton's regular tours through the industrial north. But it seems that his home base was in Brixton. A wonderfully imaginative poster in the Wellcome Collection (Fig. 4) dating from August 1896 shows him at the Brixton Hall, probably at the start of his annual tour – and depicts William Hamilton himself – and another slide in the set reads 'OUTSIDE THE BON MARCHE BRIXTON ROAD / TAKEN ESPECIALLY FOR MR. HAMILTON / SAT. AUG. 31st [1901]!'. The Bon Marché was a department store, so big that it had its own residential block for employees, and this was probably the London equivalent of a 'factory gate' film.

The final slide in the group reads 'Coronation Naval Review / The Royal Yacht passing down the Lines', and probably introduced film of Edward VII's coronation celebrations in August 1902, taken by Hepworth & Co. and listed in its catalogue as 'The Naval Review – Progress of the Royal Yacht'.

This superficially uninteresting group of slides thus represents the attempt by a touring panorama showman to keep his entertainment up to date after the appearance of projected moving pictures. They are title slides for the films in William Hamilton's touring show, and were possibly being shown as a group as late as 1902, for the Boer War ended just three months before Edward VII's coronation, and the war films could still have been attractive to audiences. But the appeal of such films, shown on an outdated projector, would not have lasted much longer, and by the time that Hamilton died in 1907 his sort of touring show had had its day.

Does anyone else have similar 'Announcement Slides' in their collections, perhaps unrecognised? I have not been able to locate any similar slides in film archives, but they are more likely to survive in the collections of MLS members.

**HAMILTON'S EXCURSIONS,**  
 Visiting Places made Interesting by the  
**LATEST EVENTS OF THE DAY.**  
**MAGNIFICENT VARIETY PROGRAMME**  
 Special Engagement of  
**THE AGUZZIS,**  
 Telegraph Wire Eccentrics.  
**"TALLY-HO,"**  
 The Great Hunting Sensation as seen at the London Hippodrome.  
 Employees of Messrs. Horrockses, Crewdson, and Co., Ltd. leaving the Mill in Church-street, and the Latest Pictures by  
**THE ERAGRAPH.**  
 ST. JOHN and DWIGHT. Middle. FELIX.  
 HORACE PICKETT. CLAUDE HOWELL.  
 LOUIE HOWELL. THE THREE CLIFTONS.  
 MICHAEL O'SHEA. LAUGHABLE SKETCHES.  
 Prices: Stalls, 3s.; Reserved Seats, 2s.; Balcony, 1s.  
 AREA, 6d.  
 Children Half-price, Except 6d. Seats.

4. Poster for Hamilton's Excursions (courtesy of the Wellcome Collection)



NOTES

1. Claire Dupré la Tour 'Intertitles and Titles', in Richard Abel (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of Early Cinema*, Routledge, London, 2011, pp. 326–7.
2. Charles Urban Trading Company, *We Put The World Before You*, CUTC catalogue, November 1903, p. 201.
3. The film, digitised by British Pathé, can be seen on YouTube as *High Diving at Milan Baths*.
4. *Lancashire Evening Post*, 'Preston Amusements', 8 October 1901, p. 4 col. 5.
5. *The Era*, 'Wanted, to sell', 19 February 1898, p. 29 col. 5 and *ibid.*, 'Wanted, Picture Worker', 26 February 1898, p. 26 col. 1.
6. Denis Gifford, 'Frank Haydon and George Urry', in Stephen Herbert and Luke McKernan (eds), *Who's Who of Victorian Cinema*, BFI, London, 1996, pp. 63–4.
7. *Lancashire Evening Post*, 'Tonight! Tonight!', 7 October 1901 p. 1 col. 2.

## A SMALL STEREOPTICON ...



This large biennial magic lantern was spotted by David Starkman (pictured) and photographed by Susan Pinsky (both from California) in May when the Stereoscopic Society went on a coach tour to Beamish – The Living Museum of the North – in County Durham, UK.

They believe it was inside the school in the 1900s Pit Village. The plate (enlarged) gives the maker as Walter Tyler of 48 Waterloo Road, London. Tyler opened a shop at 115 Waterloo Road in 1885 and moved to no. 48 in 1887. The business developed into one of the largest retailers of lanterns, lantern accessories and slides in the UK.

