

FROM THE CHAIR

Richard Feltham

We had an entertaining meeting in Birmingham, which gave my biennial its first outing at an MLS event. It was great to have some new and less frequent presenters, as well as our more regular contributors, taking part. I hope that we will see them again at future meetings and more new presenters will emerge to increase the variety of shows we are able to include. If you have a presentation – even just a few interesting slides or equipment items for the ‘bring and show’ slot – we would love to see them. If you have never taken part in a meeting and need some advice or perhaps the loan of a few slides to complete a sequence, let us know and we can help.

By the time you read this, many members will have attended the special meeting in the Netherlands. Although I am writing this before the meeting I am sure that everyone will have had a great time. A very big ‘thank you’ goes to Monique Wezenberg, Henk Boelmans Kranenburg and all those involved, for the hard work and organisation that has gone into making this event happen. I was very sad not to have been able to attend in person, but I was there in spirit.

Plans are in hand for another European meeting, to take place in Girona, Catalunya, next year. This will be our spring meeting in April, so be prepared to plan your trip and keep your eyes open for more details.

I am looking forward to seeing as many members as possible in Hove for our summer meeting. A windmill is certainly a very different and interesting location for our meeting – although I suspect many of us have an appropriate slide in our collections. Allan and Rene Marriott have set this up with other local members, and we send our thanks to them. If you can suggest an interesting venue that is capable of hosting at least 50 people, we would love to hear about it for future meetings.



Questions Answered

What should I look for in a slide?

This is a difficult question, as it depends on individual interests. If you are new to the delights of the magic lantern, I recommend concentrating on slides that are in good working condition relating to subjects that interest you. Begin with slides that enable you to start giving shows (for yourself or friends). There are many surviving commercially-produced sets, and the online Society Library includes readings you can use or adapt to go with them. As you grow into the subject, you may find that you want to develop your own stories using a mix of slides.

Are slides all the same size?

NO! ‘UK’ standard glass slides are 3¼ inches (83mm) square, while ‘American’ or ‘Continental’ slides are 3¼ x 4 inches (83 x 100mm). These standards were set relatively late, in the 1880s. Apart from these, wooden slides, long slides, children’s slides, slipping slides, mechanical slides, etc., come in a wide variety of sizes, depending on the maker. Our website will give you an idea of the variety.

What kinds of subject are there?

Slide content includes stories, historical, educational, mechanical, scenic, comic and scientific material. If you can think of it, there is probably a slide showing it.

What makes a slide valuable?

This is almost an impossible question to answer. I approach slide values as I would a work of art. Look at the maker, age, production method (e.g. hand-painted or not), subject matter, quality and rarity – all have to be assessed. But in the end it comes down to what somebody is prepared to pay for it!