

STORIES TO SHARE – THE MLS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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It's hard to believe, but the Society has now been active on social media for ten years. It's time, then, to celebrate by picking some personal highlights and reminding you, our members, of ways in which you can be involved.

Social media allows us to create, share and aggregate content on a variety of digital platforms. The Society took its first steps with *Facebook* and *Twitter* (now *X*), shortly followed by *YouTube*, and the latest addition to our communication platforms is *Instagram*. Each one works differently and allows for interaction with a diversity of audiences. Our aim of course is to reach as wide an audience as possible, spread the word about the wonderful optical medium that is the magic lantern, encourage people to put on and attend lantern shows, and make new friends – some of whom we hope will also become members.

Not everyone engages with online social media but we do all engage with optical media and have stories to share. We invite you to share those stories!

Call to members

Here are a few reminders:

- If you haven't done so already, sign in to the Members' Area of the MLS website and update your membership record with the details of any personal social media accounts you have.
- Don't forget to 'follow' us, even if you don't often join in the conversation.
- Do you post on social media? Remember to @share it with us.
- Want to post on behalf of the Society? Join the social media team!
- Regularly send us text and images. The stories could be topical, seasonal, instructional, newsworthy, celebratory, inspiring, entertaining – the list is long.

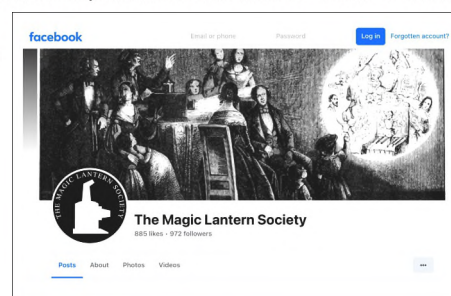
If you're not sure which platform is best for your content, don't worry, just send it to us; we'll put it where it will go best, and it may appear on more than one platform. Email suggestions for all our social media to socialmedia@magiclantern.org.uk. If you need inspiration, the following sections give some examples of previous posts.

Facebook (www.facebook.com/TheMagicLanternSociety/)

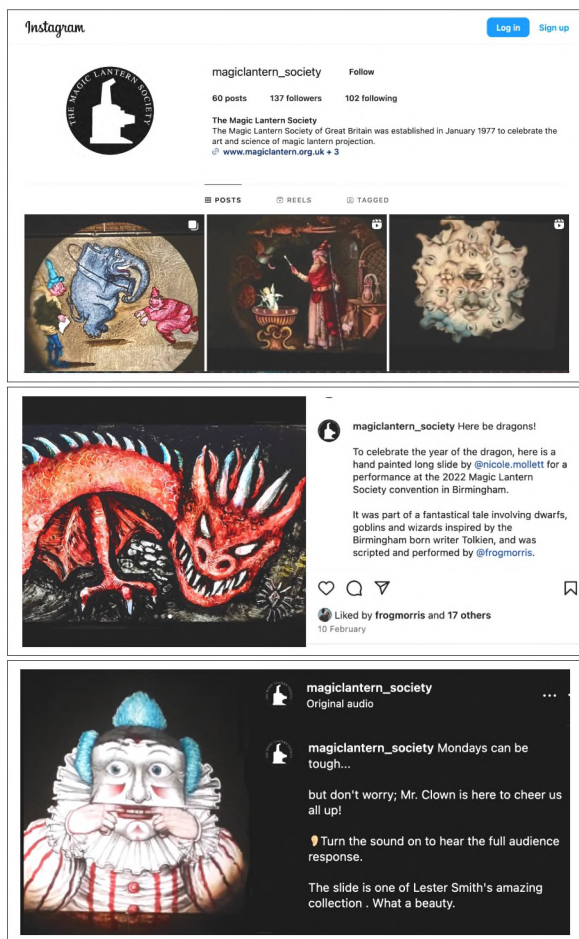
It is claimed that more than one third of the world's population is connected via Facebook, and we have been a part of that statistic since 2014. The Society's page, managed initially by Juliette Harcourt and since 2023 by Nicole Mollett, has 972 followers to date – the US and Canada MLS group has a similar number of members. We are always looking for ways to improve the experience for our followers and are currently considering changing the 'page' to a 'group'. If you're wondering what the difference is between a page and a group here's the explanation given by the platform itself: 'Pages are places on Facebook where organisations can connect with their fans or customers. When someone likes or follows a Page on Facebook, they can start seeing updates from that Page in their Feed.'

'Groups are a place to communicate about shared interests with certain people. You can create a group for anything [...] and customise the group's privacy settings depending on who you want to be able to join and see the group. When you join a group on Facebook, you start seeing content from that group in your Feed.'

Joining Facebook allows you to connect with people and organisations over a shared interest. It acts as a social network, alerting you to newly-posted content; this may typically include: Photos (sometimes arranged into Albums), Videos (MP4, MOV and many other formats), and Reels (short videos of up to 90 seconds with descriptions and hashtags). We love to share and promote the work of our members, and we encourage active engagement.



MLS Facebook pages



MLS Instagram posts

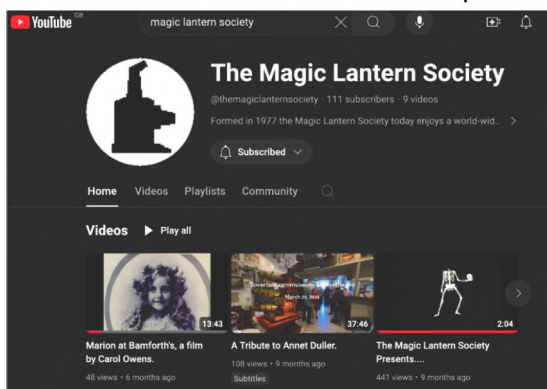
singer-songwriter and composer Jamie Doe (he performs as 'The Magic Lantern') and by various Magic Lantern cinemas and theatres. Having said that, there are definitely more genuine magic lantern related posts out there these days, especially as universities and museums are starting to share news on their events and collections.

Original visual content is always hard to come by, especially if you don't own a collection, and like all social media X is constantly 'hungry' – we regularly run out of new things to post. Nothing hangs around for long on X unless it is shared ('reposted'). On the plus side, this makes it very dynamic – great for letting people know about events and current ideas. So please send us details about upcoming shows, meetings, or interesting bits of kit. Sometimes we can do what's known as a 'thread' where we set up a number of linked posts to tell a short, interesting story. A recent example was a short thread on repairing cracked slides.

YouTube (www.youtube.com/@themagiclanternsociety)

Thanks to George Auckland, MLS members now have online access to many hours of video content recorded from our meetings and elsewhere. We share a small selection of these with the general public via our YouTube account, and we are keen to continue adding content which will attract, inform and delight the uninitiated and the well-versed alike.

Reflecting the interests of our worldwide membership, video content for our YouTube channel can cover all forms of visual media and optical diversions right up to the 21st century. If



Instagram (www.instagram.com/magiclantern_society/)

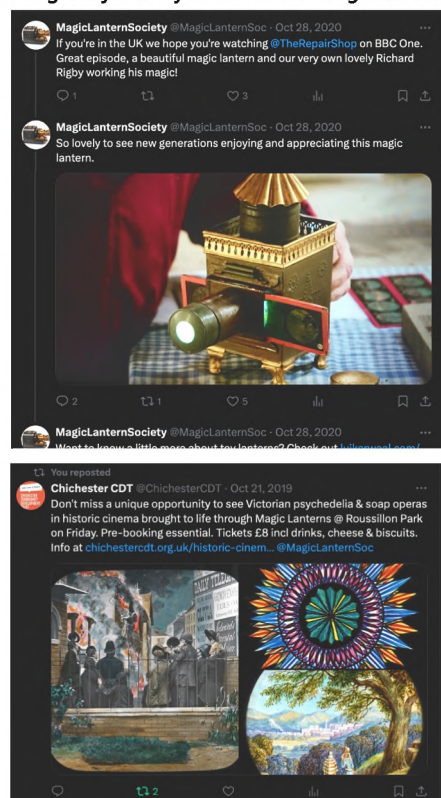
Although only five months old (Nicole launched it in January 2024) our Instagram account already has 137 followers. This media-sharing platform appeals to a younger visuals-loving audience – around a billion of them worldwide, and around half of the UK's population – and works best for images and short videos.

It's an ideal platform for visual storytelling, and since it works best with square pictures this means it works well for standard 3¼-inch size lantern slides. To share in our magic lantern related digital 'Show and Tell', send us your pictures and short videos as well as the messages you want to include, making sure they contain words you would expect to be useful to search on. Here (on the left) by way of inspiration, are some examples from our own posts and from the results of a search on the term 'lantern slide'. As with all social media platforms, if you see something you like, don't forget to 'like', 'comment' or 'share' it.

X (formerly Twitter) (x.com/MagicLanternSoc)

When we joined it in June 2014, the advantage of this micro-blogging platform was being able to share informative and timely content about the magic lantern and the Society's activities and, importantly, to openly display our live Twitter feed on the Society website's home page. However the platform has seen big changes since Elon Musk acquired it in 2023. To view our posts and interact with us on X you now need to have your own account, as you do for Facebook and Instagram. The Society's account was created by Anastasia Kerameos, with Sandra Lawrence joining the team in 2024.

Twitter initially limited content to 140 characters (now 240), establishing a reputation for almost-instant news sharing, faster than traditional news media, and using 'hashtags' to mark 'trending' subjects. If you search for 'magic lantern' you are frustratingly likely to find posts on Canon's Magic Lantern camera software, references to Aladdin's magic lantern, posts on or by the



you can help us to create new content – perhaps to add to a new playlist of 'How to...', 'A chat with...', 'Moving slides in action', and so on – please get in touch!

MLS YouTube channel (left) and X (formerly Twitter) home page (right)

