

Million Pictures

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Slide 1:

A Lantern Slide Journey: 127 years in just 5 minutes



The slide artefact (from the Hecht collection: Little Match Girl)



Dear Spectator. Please let me introduce myself. I am, amongst, I have been told, a million others, that eye-catching and magical thing: A Lantern Slide!

Slide 2:

a view of the series



I exist as part of a series, a packaged set of 9, where I fit snug with my community of friends and family.

**Slide 3:
lantern in performance**



We only come to life through the art of projection. An ingenious performance in which we like to be the star of the show but we cannot shine without a little – yes, I know I should say – a lot of help from more friends: the lens and light system in the box, the great dexterity of the lanternist, the sensitivity of the lecturer / showman and, of course, the audience.

However – Beware! – the thing is: I am still here, they are not!

**Slide 4:
Image, artefact and lineage**



My centre and heart is an image; a representation; a picture of “a little match girl”. I am proud to be part of a long lineage of ‘match girls’, as portrayed in drawings, books, photographs, films, sculptures, dolls ... you name it ... we are quite famous you know.

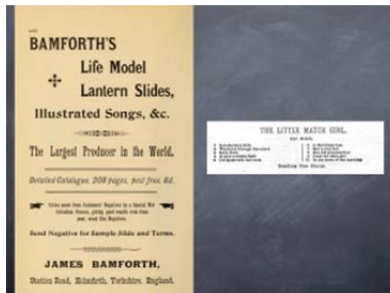
**Slide 5:
Bamforth Studio**



I was conceived in 1890 in the town of Holmfirth in Yorkshire by slide manufacturers (James) Bamforth & Co. I was part of a growing successful business. Only two years

earlier a factory extension was built. The company specialised in Life Model Slide sets. They are moving stories, often with a moral twist. The slide scenes are photographed tableaux, mostly in front of painted backdrops. It was wonderful to work with other life models, all members of the Bamforth family, workforce or locals. The negative plate was carefully inspected and made into the 'me' as I am in front of you now: a UK standard format masked and bound glass slide positive. The girls made a good job at doing the colouring.

Slide 6: Hire / sale catalogues



I soon ventured out into the wider world. Me and my friends were publicised in catalogues and other listings, available for hire and sale. Not just in the homeland counties of Great Britain, but across the water in Europe and sailing even further afield across oceans to Australia.

Slide 7: Church Army



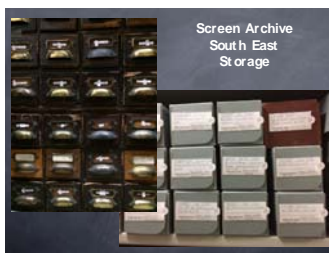
One new community that embraced me was the Church Army. I fitted quite well in their zealous Christian message. Poverty was a big issue and our story hit the note for good-doers and children alike. The Church Army had their own slide catalogues, hire service and itinerant mobile homes and reached audiences way into the 1930s. Then for a while total darkness. Back in a slide cabinet with rare outings. Was this to be the end of my journey?

Slide 8: Hermann and Ann Hecht



A very scary moment: there was I and there was the skip. It was the 1960s and the Church Army was getting rid of their glass lantern slide collection. But hoorah! A most welcome rescue. Hermann Hecht on his way to work spotted me and my family and arranged a van and I moved from public to private. It was the beginning of a wonderful friendship. Ann and Hermann Hecht were keen collectors, knowledgeable writers and educational performers. Their lantern shone its light in little gatherings at home as well as illuminating students at his art college. Happy Days indeed.

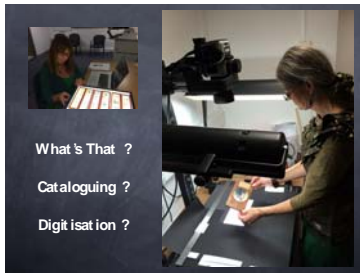
**Slide 9:
SASE archive**



At the end of 2003 I was ready for another move. This was quite new to me. I was ACQUIRED by the then still called South East Film & Video Archive. I am gratified to have played a part in their wise decision to change their name to Screen Archive South East in 2006. Because of course we lantern slides are an important part of moving image and screen history. I only will say this once: we are NOT a primitive precursor to film and cinema. I do not like being characterised as pre-cinema either. I am here raising the banner: Power to the lantern slide!

An archive. That is quite a different thing. I was packed off to a strongroom, temperature and humidity controlled. But I am glad to say I held on to the familiarity of being snug in the old Church Army wooden slide cabinet.

**Slide 10:
Cataloguing / digitisation**



The archivist did all sorts of curious things such as cleaning my glasses, inspecting my back front and me sides, and then writing it all down what was called cataloguing. And then there was something new-fangled named DIGITISATION. I thought I was photograph enough but no I was photographed again, for 'easy access' they said.

**Slide 11:
Lucerna**



And so I have a (Siamese) twin now. Whilst I rest peacefully in the archive my double ended up on the WORLD WIDE WEB in the wonderful one and only LUCERNA web resource. People want to look at me again, I say, less for moralisation ..., more for information ...

**Slide 11:
Powerpoint**



So the journey continues and here I am again, after 127 years, part of this powerpoint presentation, yet another lantern heritage adaptation. It is nice to know that I can keep on wandering, and inspire and spread wonder and magic. I salute you. 'Goodnight'.