

In an effort to locate this missing "show" I traced (via the A.P.R. Photographic Journal in 1953) the various clubs the Tribute had been shown - quite a few - & wrote to these clubs etc. All to no avail. The last definite date was in Adelaide 6-10-53.

COLOUR CLINIC



Did you see this! Gael?

It is a sad thing when precious items become lost or mislaid — and even more so when they have been created by a talent whose like we may never see again.

Magic Lantern Mystery

Recently I acquired a 100-year old 'Magic Lantern'... the forerunner of today's sophisticated slide projector. While mine is now a piece of memorabilia, in those far-off days before 1890 the lantern projector was a very common and widespread item used for home entertainment. Indeed, a great many were manufactured as 'toys', with inexpensive models being made for children.

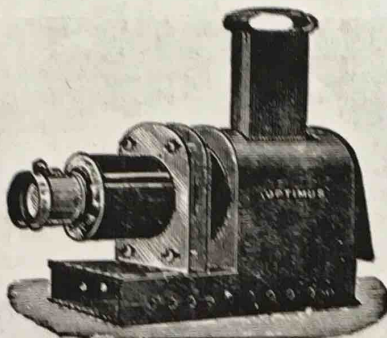
Professional entrepreneurs travelled from hall to hall giving lantern shows. Many of the slides (the name 'slides' being derived from the side-to-side sliding action made when changing) were pictorial and scenic photographs laboriously hand-coloured.

Slide shows were probably most common from about 1860 on, reaching their peak in the late 1890s, and continuing well into this century. Indeed, many local lantern slide shows were still being given up to World War I. However, as first movies became popular in the 1920s, and then talks just before 1930, the lantern show fell into disuse.

But even when colour film became available for still photography, and colour films such as Dufaycolor and Agfachrome and Kodachrome became available in 1938, their relative cost counted against them somewhat. Most photographic manufacturers still offered lantern slide 'plates' (black and white emulsion coated onto glass plates) right up until about 1955. In fact, as many photographers were in the habit of mounting their colour transparencies between glass, recycled 2" x 2" lantern slide glass was an excellent medium. It only required *passe partout* tape (these were the days before pressure-sensitive 'sticky' tape) to bind the edges and your slide was protected against handling as well as supported for projection.

In an electronic age it would be easy to dismiss experiences such as a lantern slide show and prejudge it as being boring. Not so. In fact, one of the most memorable and stimulating events in my lifetime was seeing Rosalind Maingot's floral exhibits at the Assembly Hall, Margaret Street, Sydney in the late 1940s. Miss Maingot, then President of the Royal Photographic Society brought to Australia her collection of quarter-plate Kodachromes. Yes, that's right, sheet Kodachromes in the 9 x 12cm format. These were projected with a large format projector to give a screen image some 20 feet wide. The quality was simply astounding.

In the same vein, another lantern slide show shortly afterwards was one tinged with much pride and pathos. It was the testimonial and tribute to Harold Cazneaux shortly before he



Forerunner of the modern-day slide projector, the Magic Lantern was used to present some of the most exciting early slide shows — one being the tribute to Harold Cazneaux in 1952.

died. Caz, as he was affectionately known, was then 74 years of age and had a distinguished career as both a professional and exhibition photographer. The special tribute on October 27, 1952, was highlighted by a screening of a wide selection of Caz's best works made into lantern slides and toned to match his sepias and bromolids. All of Sydney's notables as well as representatives of every camera club in Australia were present at this warm and well-thronged gathering.

The evening's programme was called simply "Milestones" and was accompanied by a taped interview and comments by some of Sydney's leading exhibition photographers, including some wry comments by the great photographer himself.

When Caz died on June 19 the following year, Jack Cato (the famous Victorian photographer and historian) wrote in the *Melbourne Age* that this selection of 50 lantern slides and the actual voice recording were now even more valuable since the man himself was no longer available to consult about Australia's early days in photography.

Ironically, news of Caz's death reached members of the Northern Tasmanian Camera Club on the very evening they were seeing "Milestones". The tape-synchronised tribute was being shown in various Australian centres. From Sydney it had travelled to Melbourne, where it was shown in late January 1953, and subsequently to northern Tasmania. The then President of the NTCC, John Ikin, wrote a letter of condolence to Keast Burke, at that time editor of *Australasian Photo-Review*, who was instrumental in arranging for the nation's tribute to Caz. Ikin wrote: "I trust that his (Caz's) work

and his voice will now be placed in safe keeping in the archives of Australian photography."

Alas, that was not to be. The sound/slide exhibition was scheduled to go from Tasmania to South Australia. The exact dates of the South Australian showing are not known, but a letter from noted Australian painter Hans Heysen (a personal friend of Cazneaux) to Rainbow (Caz's daughter and co-worker for many years) mentioned his regret at not being able to see "Milestones" in Adelaide on October 6, 1953 owing to a previous engagement.

From that time, all trace of this important piece of Australian history has been lost. Although future bookings had been made for Brisbane and Perth, there seems to be no further record of this valuable collection. As a keen witness to Australian photographic history, it would be a marvellous gesture if some camera club member who remembers "Milestones" and may know of the whereabouts of this slide set and tapes could unearth them for the benefit of present and future generations of exhibition photographers.

The slides were largely those seen in the December 1952 issue of *Australasian Photo-Review*, and the tape an interview between Monte Luke and Harold Cazneaux. The recording was made by Dr A. Chaffer and Charles Walton and, regretfully, no duplicate was made.

As author of "History of Australian Photography" in the Australian Encyclopaedia, I have a strong commitment to keeping track of discoveries of early workers and their pictures... and none less so than trying to locate Caz's lost works. At one time we thought we were onto the missing lantern plates when a message was received from a Mrs Springfield of Nelson Bay to the effect that her family had found a wooden box of "old pictures" under the house in which she had been living in the Balmain area. But all attempts to trace 'Mrs Springfield' drew a blank because our informant had received only a garbled account over the phone and failed to ask for the caller's current address or phone number.

I know that reminiscing about lantern slides may have little to do with present day photography but the early photographic pioneers laid the foundation of today's camera clubs and established the various photographic journals that keep us informed of new developments in our craft.

Anyone having any knowledge of the Cazneaux tape or slides is invited to contact the author care of *Australian Photography* magazine, GPO Box 606, Sydney, NSW 2001. •

by Max Wilson

It was to tour the Commonwealth to various clubs & societies. Then go to the Nat. Library. A.C.T. R.J.