SCREEN CULTURE AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION
Poverty on Screen 1880 – 1914

Conference at the
German Historical Institute (London)
in cooperation with the
Screen1900 Project (University of Trier)
London 1 – 3 December 2011

With funding from the German Research Foundation

Convenors: Prof. Dr. Andreas Gestrich (GHIL), Dr. Ludwig Vogl-Bienek (University of Trier)

This conference will bring together different international research approaches looking at how the optical lantern (‘art of projection’) and cinematography were used in the context of the Social Question around 1900. The media history relevance of the Social Question to the establishment of these new visual media has hardly so far been examined. Nor have these media been critically investigated as social history sources. The conference aims to make a fundamental contribution towards establishing an innovative field of research in the area where social history and media history overlap.

The rapid success of ‘cinematography’ at the beginning of the twentieth century owed much to what was known as the ‘art of projection’. The screen became firmly established as a part of international cultural life in the second half of the nineteenth century by the ‘art of projection’. The enormous creative potential of these new visual media in public performances was used not only for commercial purposes, but also for events in areas such as education, religion, and social policy.

The interdisciplinary comparison will discuss the state of research on the motifs, production, dissemination, and reception of the projection media in the field of poor relief and social policy. Different methodological concepts will be introduced for researching the performative potential of existing scripts and artefacts (glass slides, films, projectors). In addition, projects editing sources will be presented, and new processes for digitally reproducing and documenting historical sources and artefacts will be discussed.
Conference Programme

Thursday, 1 December 2011:

13:00
Registration

14:00
Welcome and Introduction
Andreas Gestrich (German Historical Institute London) and Ludwig Vogl-Bienek (University of Trier)

14:30 – 17:00
Panel 1: Screen Culture and the Public Sphere – Historic Context and Social Impact 1880 – 1914
Chair: Ian Christie (London)

Martin Loiperdinger (Trier): The Social Impact of Screen Culture 1880 – 1914.
Stephen Bottomore (Bangkok): The Lantern and Early Film for Social and Political Uses.

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:00 Comment and Discussion Panel 1
Comment by Andreas Gestrich (London)

17:15 – 19:00
Road Show: Approaches to the Hidden History of Screen Culture

Frank Gray (Brighton): The Lucerna Network for the History of Projection.
Ine van Dooren (Brighton): Archiving and preserving lantern slides and related resources.
Richard Crangle (Exeter): Digitizing the History of Screen Culture: The Lucerna Database.
Friday, 2 December 2011:

09:30 – 12:30

**Panel 2: Raising Public Awareness for the Living Conditions in Slums and Tenements**
Chair: Clemens Zimmermann (Saarbrücken)

Ludwig Vogl-Bienek (Trier): Slum Life and Living Conditions of the Poor in Fictional and Documentary Lantern Slide Sets.

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:30
Comment and Discussion Panel 2
Comment by Jürgen Berger (Mannheim)

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch Break

14:00 – 17:00

**Panel 3 – Education and Entertainment for the Poor – the Use of Lantern Shows and Early Films by Charity Organisations**
Chair: Ine van Dooren (Brighton)

Karen Eifler (Trier): Free Meals and Lantern Shows: Charitable Events in Great Britain and Germany.

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00 – 17:00 Comment and Discussion Panel 3
Comment by Frank Gray (Brighton)

19:00 (pay bar from 6pm, show at 7pm)
Evening Programme at The Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Square, London WC1N 1AZ

“TIDINGS OF COMFORT AND JOY
A festive and true-made Victorian Magic Lantern Show for the deserving poor of London”
by Mervyn Heard with Juliette Harcourt (recitation and song) and Stephen Horne (piano)
Saturday, 3 December 2011:

09:00 – 12:00
Panel 4 – Social Prevention with the Aid of the Screen and Exhibitions
Chair: Richard Crangle (Exeter)

Annemarie McAllister (Preston): The Promotion of Temperance by means of the Magic Lantern.
Michelle Lamunière (Harvard University): Sentiment as Moral Motivator: From Jacob Riis’s Lantern Slide Presentations to Harvard University’s Social Museum.

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break

11:00 – 12:00 Comment and Discussion Panel 4
Comment by Scott Curtis (Evanston)

12:00 – 13:00
Closing Remarks and General Discussion
Chair: Andreas Gestrich
Closing Remarks by Ian Christie (London) and Clemens Zimmermann (Saarbrücken)