

## Victorian Optical Illusions

Mr Kevin Varty from Milton Keynes Museum gave a very interesting talk on Victorian optical illusions. He brought with him many examples of these and demonstrated many of them, he also allowed us to have a go ourselves. Some of his more fascinating examples were pictures, usually in postcard format which when viewed under normal conditions displayed one thing but under different lighting either blossomed into colour or showed a different scene. He also had a number of kaleidoscopes, magic lanterns and his most mesmerising artefact being a Chinese Mirror. If you get a chance you really should take look at one of these.

The particular mirror he demonstrated to us was a small solid bronze disc, about 3 inches in diameter. It was quite thick, probably about half an inch and on one side was a polished convex mirror surface while the other side had a carving of the signs of the zodiac. When a bright light was shone on the mirrored surface an image of the other side would be projected onto the nearby wall in quite some detail. If you looked closely at the mirrored surface you could not see any dents or blemishes that would produce this reflection, but yet somehow it did. Had us all baffled.

