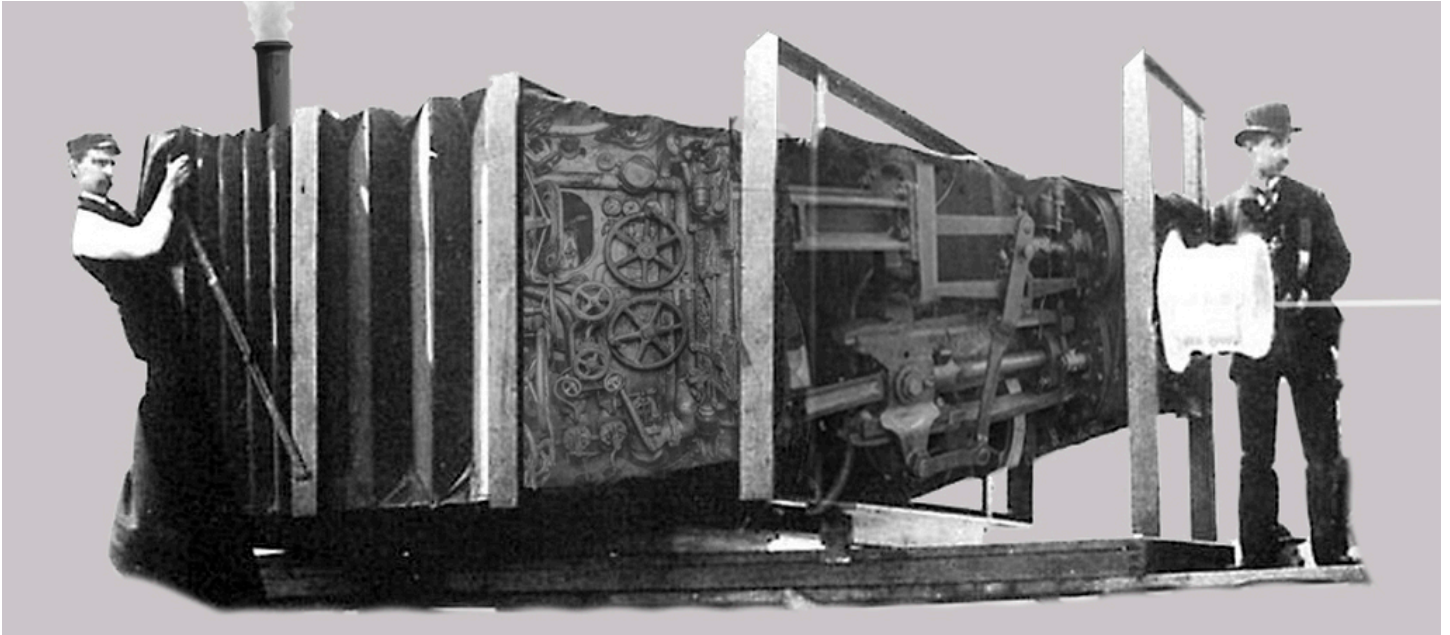


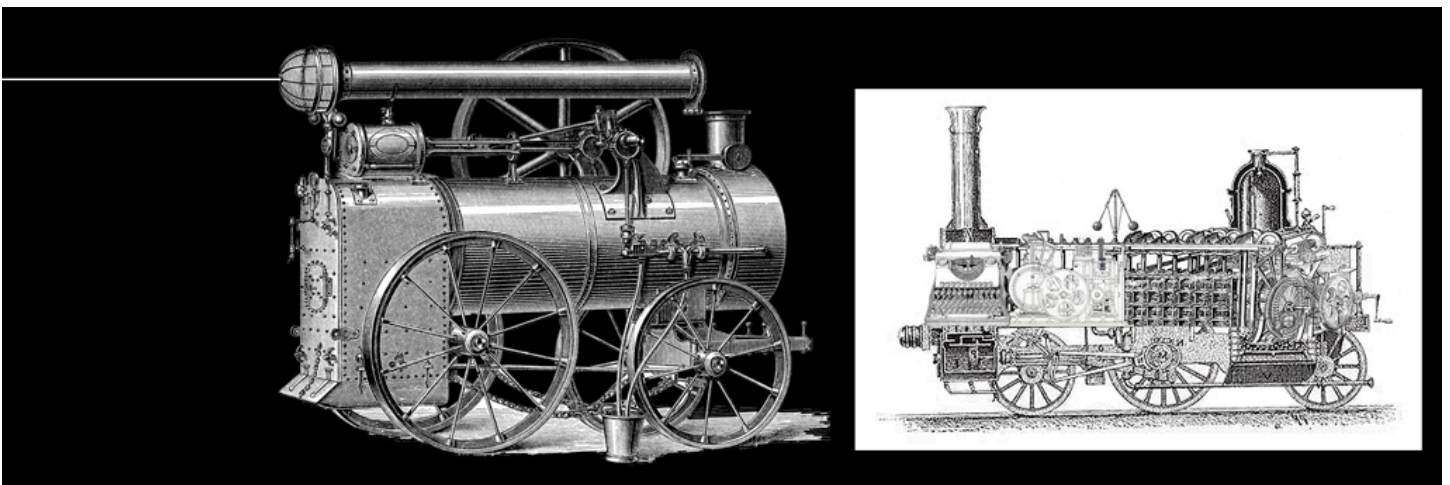
Lasers of the Victorian Era

An article appearing in the 4/1/2018 edition of *Popular Photonics Magazine*.

The reign of Queen Victoria saw a number of advancements in technology: steam engines, the beginnings of the electrical industry, and, of course, the introduction of lasers into mainstream life. French Scientific pioneers such as Prof. Fermé D'Aperture and Dr. Flickre Galveaux led the development of the first coal-gas lasers, using bituminous vapors as lasing media. The word "Laser" is a French acronym for "Lampe Atomique Sanitaire et Raisonnable", a reference to its use configured as lumia in French insane asylums of the day as a calming agent.



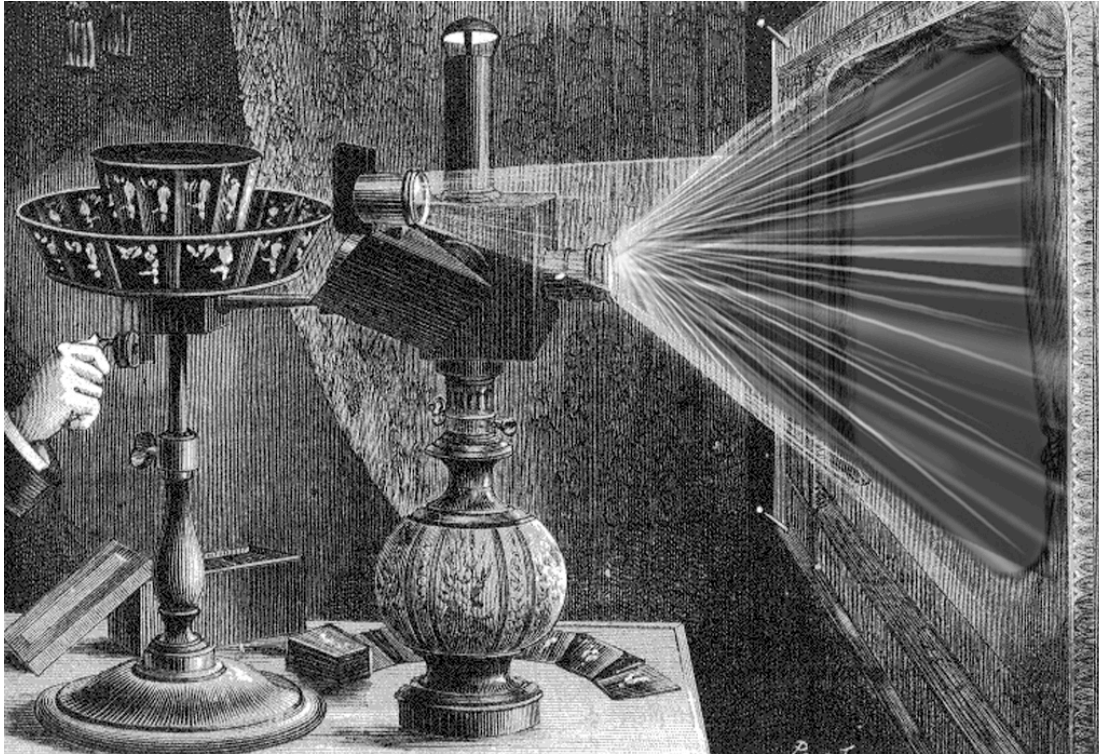
The United States also had its share of optical savants. Above is a rare photo of the Lumentaire brothers, Walleye and Lefty, at the controls of their behemoth laser, *Ol' Straighty*. This was used to line-cut large swathes of pines and firs for the Christmas tree industry. Mounted on a railway flatbed trailer, this was hauled to various tree farms across the Midwest, where it was so successful it led to the total deforestation of Oklahoma and the beginning of the Dust Bowl.



Meanwhile, in England, Dr. Ignatius What and his sister Milli invented the world's first scanning laser, the Dreadnewt. This was controlled by a pneumatic computer called "The Framing Engine" that was hauled around behind the laser's carriage. Using ultra high-pitch scanners made by the Dog Wheestle Ltd. Co. of

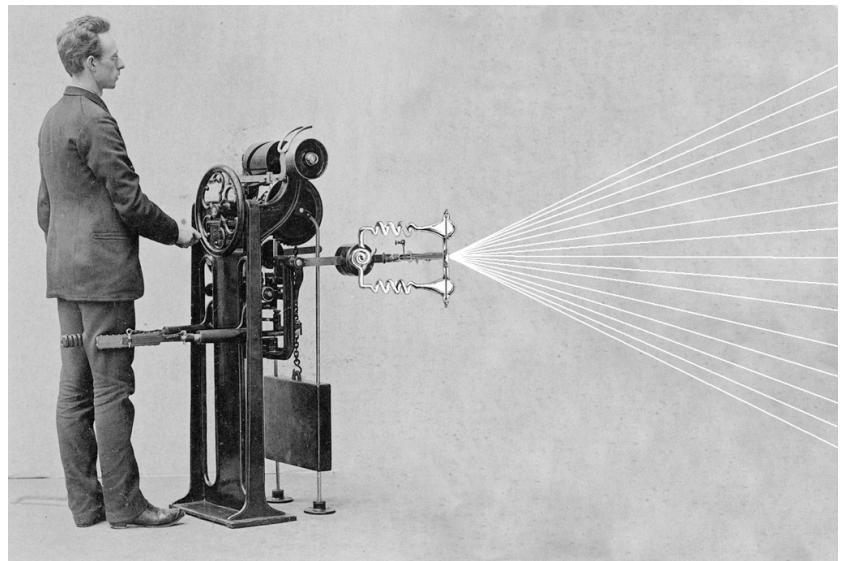
Brewster-on-the-Reservoir, Leeds, this design was used to entertain the crews building the first railway lines and stations.

Accompanied by a brass band that would march around the carriage, Dreadnawt would draw etchings and sketchings on the side of the chalk cliffs that surrounded the railways. This design was powered by 3-phase steam and was water-cooled: note the bucket on the side of the projector.

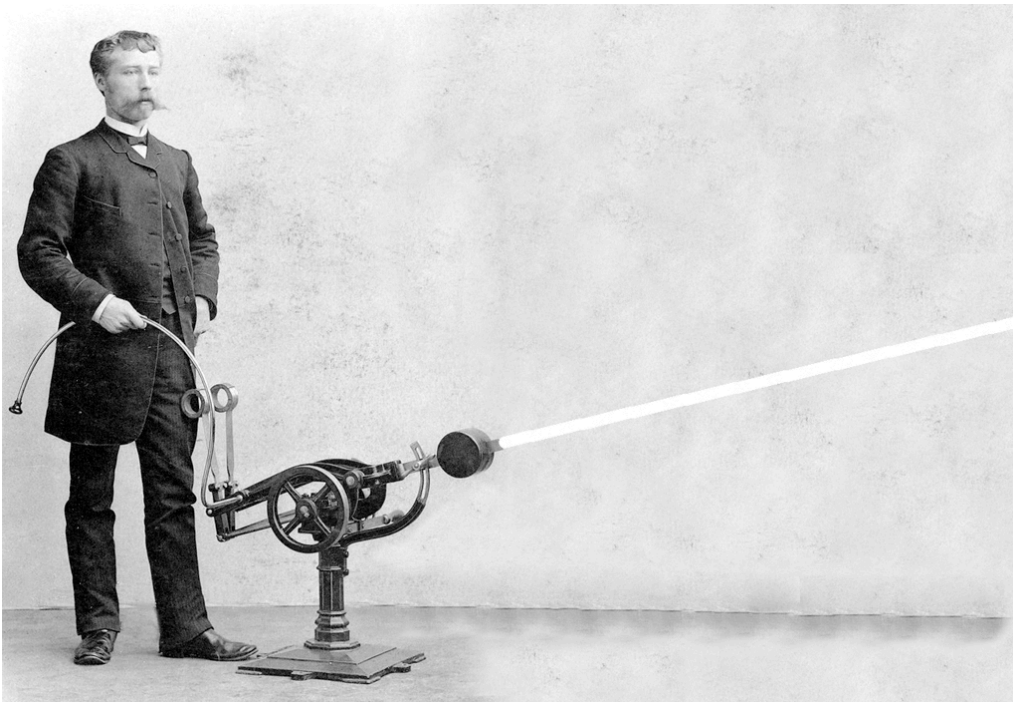
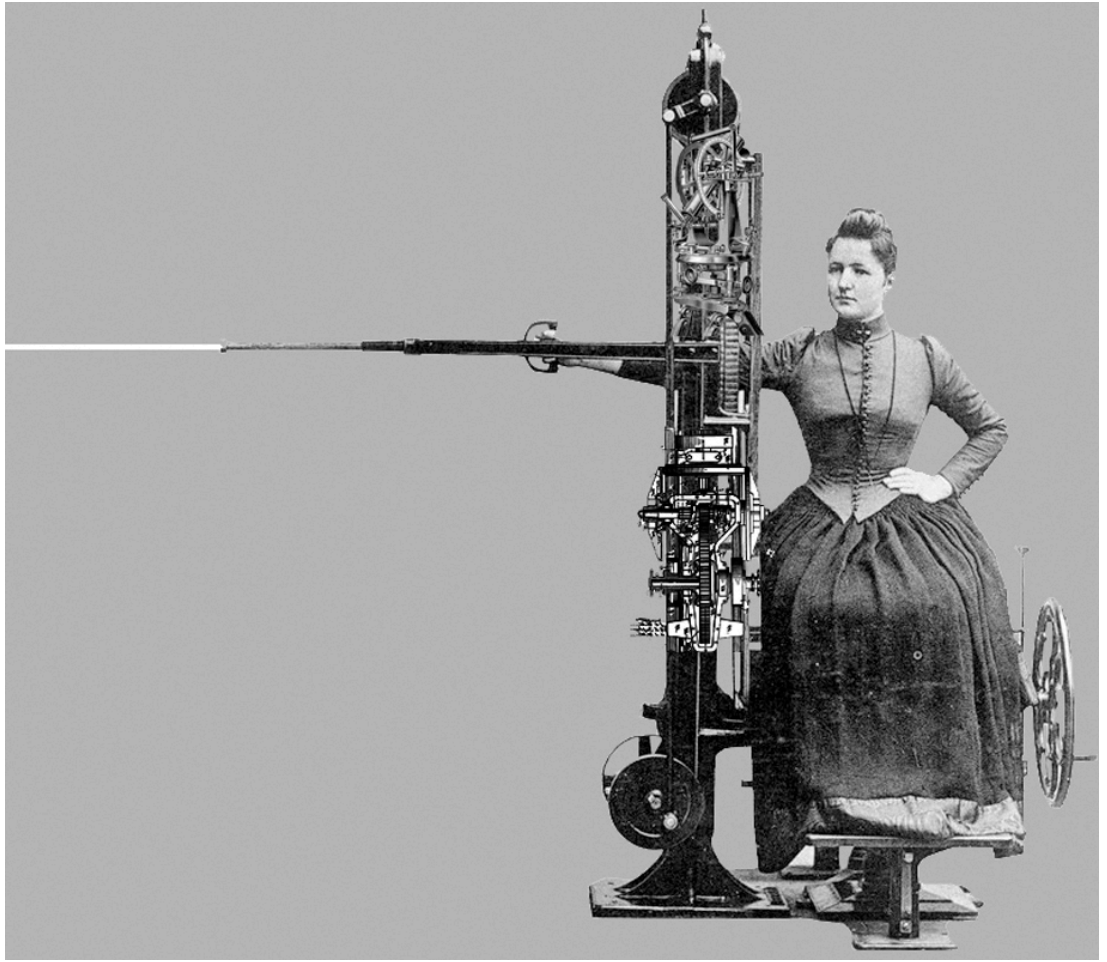


Many older magic lantern projectors of the day were upgraded to display lasers. To the left is an Acme Wonder Wheel which has had a *Maraschino* grating installed to provide a matrix of beams. A Rutherford "Electro Fizz" arc lamp excites a scrying module inside the device, providing the needed coherency. A frequency-doubling crystal made from Deoxypreposterase is also involved.

Here we see inventor Gyro Cranker at the controls to his electro/optical/mechanical *Beamerator*. It took a steady hand to run this device, as it created a lot of physical vibration. Note the thigh support system needed to maintain a proper stance. A heavy counterweight was needed to keep the entire projector from bouncing into the wings of the music halls where his shows were presented. Cranker had an act based on such musical numbers as: *I've an Anode in Me Gaiters*, *And A Cathode By The Tail* and *The Coherency Cotillion March*.



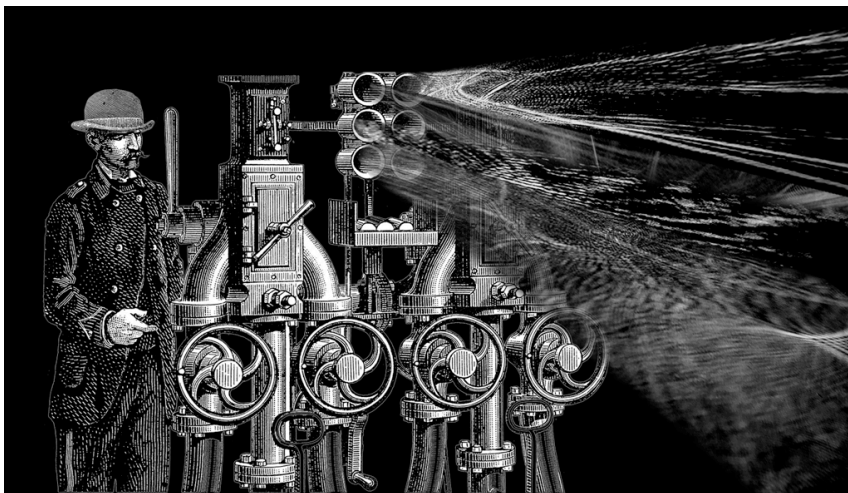
While Annie Oakley was making a name for herself as a crack rifle shot, history seems to have forgotten another female performer, Matilda "Popper" Fraunhofer. With her trusty mechanical laser, "Hole-Maker", she toured the Western United States giving presentations involving burning ticker tape and popping the observation balloons of the day.



In Germany, Otto Grossenschlepper spent years trying to interest the military in his anti-enemy ray gun, the *Auf Enputzerator*. Although he was never successful in actually blasting anything, due to the milliwatt power of his device, he eventually found work as an assistant lecturer, using his laser as a bulky pointer at the Weisenheimer Institute for Capacitance Studies.



In Paris, Mlle. Dufay was the hit of the Moulin Puce, a club popular with *ravistes*. These were late-night fans of loud music and *Pits de Moche* where early laser shows were popular. With her steam- and lung-powered projector, Dufay would leave scorch marks on the walls of the club and bright green afterimages in the eyes of her beholders, giving her the nickname of “La Grande Cinq-Trente-Deux des Yeux”.



Laser lumia was also popular in those days. This is an engraving of Sir Edgar Derby of Lightshire Abbey, demonstrating his six-pack of Lumiators. He was one of the few peers of the realm who was involved with Lumentic studies, building one of the first steam-powered lumia projectors. He was popular with the badger-hunting set and once performed before the Queen at Lumenarium, the foremost laser theater in London.

This has been my annual report on the latest in laser art history.
Tune in next year this time for more updates.

..Clickamouse

Biographer's Note: Clickamouse is the alter id and pen name (for obvious reasons) of Robot J. Van de Graaffenpaper- BongUndDongle- OymabackHertz- Nano- Neener- KnightNih- Van der Waalmart- RumplesForeskin- Grosser Schwanzstucker- mit BallzäBrassen- ByteWitz- BrewsterTinkerFiddlyBitzen- ScannerTunor- MondoPhoto- Gonzo- Gondor- TapSnapper- RosintinkleSolderBern- Bierspiller- DiödzMaken- Pangopoker- KvantWanter- Lümiater- Kinemantic- Neo- Geo- HanSoloMio- MontyPlagerizen, ILDA, OCD, BMF, of Michigan.

(For further insight into the name above, see: <http://www.montypython.net/scripts/johann.php>)

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