



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

Vol 49 No 5

September / October 2015



The sixteen-screen **Vue** at Cheshire Oaks, which has just installed a giant **IMAX** screen, photographed in July 2007 – see newsreel p14



The **Ritz** at Burnham-on-Sea (Somerset), which is to have a third screen added, photographed in August 2003 – see newsreel p13



INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [www.overthefootlights.co.uk] Free on-line books about the theatre, including an encyclopaedia of theatres in London and South Wales.
- ★ [beyondthepoint.co.uk] The Unseen History of Essex. Scroll down for photos and a short video on the Rio Canvey Island.
Sent in by Ian Levene
- ★ [www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-34000219] An article from the BBC, "Why is the UK still knocking down historic cinemas?" with photos, description and links on 12 cinemas.
Sent in by David Alexander, Robert Holden & Richard Jones

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I'm sorry that this issue is a little thinner than you have been accustomed to recently. Due to bad planning of my holidays, I only had a limited time to prepare this edition. I've held over a few items and I'll include them next time. The holiday season should be over by then and the clocks will be about to go back, so I can spend the darker nights slaving over a hot computer.

I know I've said this before but we're all friends in the CTA. Consequently there is no need to write letters to me that begin, "Dear Sir" or even "Dear Mr Rigby" – just plain "Harry" is perfectly OK.

Some of you will know my penchant for photographing unusual, interesting or amusing signs. I recently had a week in London, mainly to attend a CTA committee meeting. I cycled around and photographed some cinemas I hadn't done before. Here is a sign I saw near the Clapham Picturehouse.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER**

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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BULLETIN: Members are invited to submit items for possible publication to the Bulletin Editor. However, it is stressed that the publication of an item does not necessarily imply that it reflects the views of the Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor. It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise; items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor. Please enclose SAE and state if you require items to be returned, otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.

VISITS: Members and non-members are reminded that they attend visits entirely at their own risk and no responsibility can be accepted by the Cinema Theatre Association or the owners of the buildings for any accidents or injury sustained during the course of any visit.

PRODUCTS: The Cinema Theatre Association does not necessarily recommend or endorse any products or services advertised in the Bulletin or in any flyer or document included in any mailings to members.

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Riverside Road, London, SW17 0BA [www.ludo.co.uk]

From Margate to Madrid!

By Adam Unger and Richard Gray

Saturday 7 November

Two well-known members of the CTA team-up to bring us two different illustrated talks about their favourite subjects, with a connecting theme to spot. An evening assured to bring us varied and interesting discoveries. **Adam Unger will present:**

Julian Leathart, Architect



Dreamland Margate c1980 [from CTA Archive]

A review of the works of the respected architect Julian Leathart (initially partnered by WF Granger) who produced a small clutch of innovatively designed cinema schemes; the best known being the **Kensington Kinema** (1926), now **Odeon** and the listed **Dreamland** (1935) Margate. Both of these are topical because of recent campaigning to save them. Several other of Leathart's significant cinema designs in south west London including the listed **Richmond Kinema** (1930), now **Odeon**. Some non-cinematic schemes will be covered.

Richard Gray will present:

Madrid Cinemas Revisited

The CTA had a memorable visit to Madrid in 1989 just in time to see a cornucopia of cinema buildings, which turned out to be 'unblighted' by any modernism or sub-division. Last year during his travels, Richard revisited many of the cinemas to see how they had changed, taking photos as he found them. His talk will show a selection of photos from the original visit and compare and comment on those taken during his latest visit. It is hoped to also show video clips of the 1989 tour, filmed by CTA member John Fernee.

Members' Slide Show & Social

Saturday 16 January 2016

organised by Richard Norman

CTA Film Nites

If you haven't already done so, do join the mailing list for future CTA Film Nites. It's a way to link up with other members to visit a traditional cinema and watch a film together – and, of course, there's an opportunity to socialise over a drink or a meal afterwards. We're fixing up dates about once a month, so far just in London, to see interesting films at a cinema that's just the kind of venue CTA members should be supporting.

All you have to do to find out what's coming up and when is to join the email list. Send an email (headed CTA FILM NITES) to David Vinnels at [deco77@btinternet.com] and your name will be added to the mailing list. About a week before each Film Nite, an email will be sent out to everyone on the list with all the details: selected film, venue and how to get there. We look forward to lots more members coming along to the shows – and, of course, do bring a friend if you wish.

... more details in the full Bulletin

Archive Move

After nearly seven years residing at Roxwell Studios in Leyton, the Archive has had to move out. This is due to the unexpected news that the building is to be converted into residential accommodation. With only a few months' notice it has not been possible to find new premises to move into directly. Instead, as a temporary measure, we have taken storage units in East London to keep everything safe while we are looking for new premises to move into in the near future. I would like to thank the many volunteers who worked so hard to help pack up the Archive. This involved emptying 24 filing cabinets of records into 80 large crates for transportation. Once we arrived at our temporary home these volunteers worked tirelessly to empty all the contents of the crates back into the drawers again, all in one afternoon. Our movers, eight very professional and helpful removal men, worked very hard and managed to get all of the Archive into two large removal vans. We are now on the lookout for space of around 700 sqft or more, preferably in East or South East London but we are willing to consider any viable option, including other areas and sharing accommodation with another organisation or institution. If anyone has any suggestions please get in touch. I will keep you all up to date with progress. Due to the constraints of our storage units, it is not easy to receive visitors at present and it may not be possible to access all material to answer enquiries, which will also take longer to deal with. So unless it is urgent, please be patient and once we have moved into new accommodation we can resume our normal level of service.

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist



Our hard-working volunteers emptying the files back into the cabinets after the move.

ARCHIVE OPPORTUNITIES

The CTA Archive can offer members an excellent opportunity to contribute towards preserving our cinema heritage. Whether it be putting your particular skills to good use or just giving some of your spare time, there are plenty of opportunities within our friendly environment and you might learn something new along the way!

Please email [cta-archive@hotmail.co.uk].

HELP THE ARCHIVE IDENTIFY CINEMAS

Brian Hall posts regular weekly sets of unidentified cinema photographs on the CTA-UK Yahoo! Group. Please consider joining this group [movies.groups.yahoo.com/group/cta-uk] and help us to identify cinemas. It's great fun!

SENDING DONATIONS BY POST OR EMAIL

We are always keen to receive donated material and can accept this in different formats. Of course, we always prefer to have originals. If however you cannot part with the material, then we are happy to accept scanned material or copies of your digital photographs.

Please let me know before sending donations by post and do not send them directly to the archive as there is no facility to accept post securely. Please send items c/o 14 Ivychurch Gardens, Cliftonville, Margate, CT9 3YG. Small quantities of scanned material or digital photographs can be emailed to [cta-archive@hotmail.co.uk].

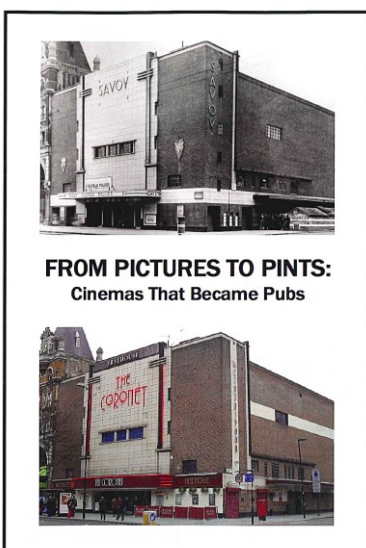
PUBLICATIONS

New Publication

From Pictures to Pints – Cinemas that Became Pubs by Gavin McGrath. A4 paperback, 30 pages, fully illustrated. £4.00 plus postage.

In this well-researched book, the author describes over 100 cinemas that have now become pubs – many of them in the Wetherspoons chain but many others too. Most are illustrated and there are potted histories of each building and its cinematic highlights. There is an appendix of proposed sites. Gavin has set certain criteria for the selection, so a few notable properties – such as the **Regal** Cambridge (which claims to be Britain's largest pub) and the **Forum** Hexham – are not included. Gavin is now working on a sister publication *From Celluloid to Cereal* for which suggestions are invited.

(Copies of the author's earlier book *Cinemas and Theatres of Tower Hamlets* are still available, price £6.99 plus postage)



Recently Published (Reviewed in previous issues)

The Magic Screen – a history of Regent Street Cinema. Various authors. Large format paperback, 178 pages, fully illustrated. £20.00 plus postage.

To celebrate the renovation and re-opening of the **Regent Street Cinema** London, its long and fascinating history has been told for the first time. Built in 1848 for showcasing 'optical exhibitions', in 1896 the theatre was the site of the first UK public performance of the Lumière's Cinématographe. It evolved into a cinema specialising in travelogues and nature films in the 1920s, becoming the **Cameo-Poly** after the Second World War. Regularly hosting premières of continental films, the cinema achieved another first with its screening of *La Vie Commence Demain* in 1951, the first [X]-certificate film in the UK. After mixed fortunes in the 1970s, the cinema closed to the public in 1980. The cinema's recent renovation and re-birth is also featured. This multi-authored volume tells the cinema's history from architectural, educational, legal and cinematic perspectives and is richly illustrated throughout with images from the University of Westminster Archive.

The Auditorium (North Warwickshire) – £12.95 plus postage

Back Numbers Available

BULLETINS

We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 2013 are £4.00 per year (6 issues); individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2014 and 2015 are £4.00 per copy. All prices include postage. There are some issues available from earlier years, 1970 to 1986 – please send enquiries to the Sales Officer.

PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

Listed below are the back numbers of Picture House that are still available, along with the main articles the particular issue contains. There are also available a few second-hand copies of out-of-print issues 9, 10, 14/15, 16, 22, 23 & 24, priced £5.00 each, plus postage. We also have just 1 or 2 copies of the extremely rare issues 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12 and 13 at £5.00 each plus postage. (If there is more demand than supply, a ballot will be held.)

No 6	£1.50	Television in the Cinema; Atherley Southampton; Hippodrome , Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; ABC in NW London.
No 17	£3.00	Special Issue featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; Ideal Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; Granada Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; Albert Hall Sheffield; Regal Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Gaumont Managers; Carlton Swansea; Committee's Choice.
No 26	£4.50	Paramount Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; Electric Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New Victoria/Apollo ; Whiteladies Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; Torbay Cinema ; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; Apollo Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: Essoldo – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the Essoldo Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New Victoria Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	Beaufort Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934
No 35	£5.00	Holophane lighting; Imitations of Odeon ; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; The Clifton Circuit; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the Electric Palace Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated; Palace Conwy; Cinema Murders; Point Milton Keynes; Carlton Haymarket; Military Cinemas.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two Regals ; Odeon North Finchley; Majestic Oxford; Films at the Royal Albert Hall .

AND WHERE TO KEEP THOSE PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINES?

'Cordex' binders, in red leather-look effect with the magazine name embossed on the spine, are available for £4.30 + £3.00 postage – they are sent in a special postal carton. Each binder holds twelve copies and will not harm or mark your magazines, which may be taken out later if desired.



Ordering

For books and other items except DVDs, please add £3.00 for post and packing for orders up to £20.00 in value, £6.00 for orders from £20.01 to £40.00 and £11.00 for orders above £40.01. For DVDs, please add £3.00 for up to 3 DVDs and £6.00 for more than 3 DVDs. Orders to Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales, 34, Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN. Cheques/POs payable to Cinema Theatre Association, or send credit/debit card number with expiry date and security code. A complete sales list is available by sending an SAE or can be seen on the CTA website [www.cta-uk.org] where you can also place your order using PayPal. A sales list is sent with every order.

CIRCUIT HISTORIES AVAILABLE

by Allen Eyles – all fully illustrated with gazetteers

ODEON 1 – Oscar Deutsch Entertains Our Nation £19.99

ODEON 2 – From J Arthur Rank to the Multiplex £19.99

THE GRANADA THEATRES £18.99

All available from the Sales Officer – address on p4.
please add £3.00 for postage.

Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

The Theatres and Concert Halls of Fellner and Helmer by Michael Sell

Published by Entertainment Technology Press
(www.etnow.com), ISBN 978-1-904031-77-2, price £23.95.

You are standing in the main square of a continental town or City. In front of you stands the principal theatre. Placed on an island site, the building is no modest-looking, shrinking violet: with pillars soaring up to meet ornamented pediments and fancy roof domes, all four exterior walls are richly decorated. A great bronze eagle may even be about to take off from the top of the fly tower.

It's quite possible that the theatre you are looking at was designed by the Viennese architectural practice of Fellner and Helmer: examples of their work are to be found across Europe. Michael Sell's book tells the story of how the two men built up their business and compares them with Frank Matcham in Britain: "Matcham and Co and the Atelier Fellner and Helmer were the mammoths of theatre design in the period from 1870-1914," Sell writes in his lively introduction. "The three men were all full of life, sociable, self-assured and great entrepreneurs and promoters of change in their field." Both firms became renowned for speedily delivering the buildings that their clients requested – although Helmer didn't hesitate to tell one theatre owner: "I'm not letting any shop front ruin my façade".

Sell makes the further point that both practices went into business soon after a series of disastrous theatre fires, involving substantial loss of life. "I could no longer spend a night without dreaming of emergency exits, emergency lights and the rest..." Fellner lamented. Similarly in Britain, one of Matcham's first jobs was to improve the fire precautions at the **Elephant and Castle Theatre** (later redesigned as the **ABC/Coronet**).

Much of the book is devoted to an illustrated gazetteer, which contains extensive detail about each of Fellner and Helmer's completed theatres. Unbuilt projects are included too – one of these, intriguingly, was a design for a grandiose opera house in New York. Some of the illustrations, particularly of auditoria, could usefully be a little larger – Fellner and Helmer's theatres were richly decorated internally as well as externally and details of plasterwork, murals etc are sometimes difficult to see. However, bigger illustrations would have increased the size and price of the book and much additional pictorial material can easily be found on the web.

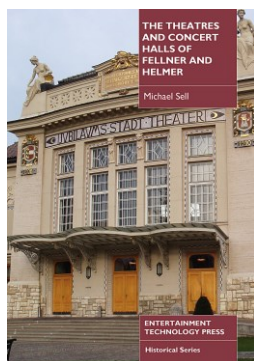
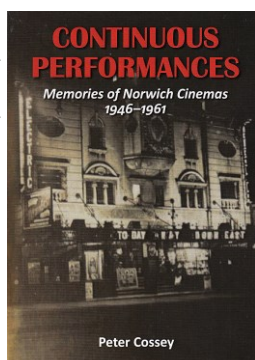
This book, the result of five years' painstaking work, may not be about cinemas in particular but it will be of great value to anyone interested in the history of entertainment buildings in general.

Giles Woodforde

Continuous Performances – Memories of Norwich Cinemas 1946-1961 by Peter Cossey

A5 paperback, published by [www.thenorwichmovieshop.com]
available on-line or their shop, 11 St Gregory's Alley NR2 1ER
price £12.00 + £3 postage; ISBN 978-1-326-37259-0

This is one man's story of what it was like to experience the magic of the pictures at a time when few people had television sets and a trip to the cinema was like stepping into another world – full of fun, where the stars could be handsome cowboys or strange creatures from far-off places. While other books have reported what others said over the years, Peter tells it straight because he was there. There are also chapters on the 13 cinemas in Norwich, illustrated with b/w photos and appendices listing some of the films they showed and on 3D and widescreen, together with a useful index.



MISCELLANY

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Perak Tengah District Council in Malaysia has ordered Lotus Five Star Cinemas not to sell double seats to unmarried couples. The decision only applies to Muslim cinema-goers.

Asia One – 23 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

ARCHITECTURAL PLAN ARCHIVE

More than 4,000 architectural plans of UK venues held by The Theatres Trust are to be catalogued for the first time. The project aims to make sure the documents can be easily accessed by anyone interested in theatre history.

The Stage – 30 July; sent in by Peter Good

BOX OFFICE GOLD

A collection of 196,000 film posters from more than 44,000 films was expected to fetch \$20m at an auction in California. In another auction at Bonhams, an original drawing of *Star Wars* film poster is part of a collection of 200 posters valued at £500,000.

Daily Telegraph – 27 June, 15 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

HAMMER HOUSES OF HORROR?

A planning application is being made to turn Bray Studios in Berkshire, where the iconic Hammer Horror films were made, into 25 new homes. Down Place House will be partially demolished and a two-storey extension added. The frontage and the original entrance lobby will be restored. Other studio buildings will go. The last remaining tenants left the site in 2014.

Maidenhead Advertiser – 23 July; sent in by R David Simpson

DEADLY NITRATE

A three-day festival showing exclusively nitrate film has been held at the **Dryden Theatre** in Rochester, New York. It is one of only three venues in the US licensed to screen the highly inflammable nitrate film. The opening film was a 1947 print of *Casablanca*, shown in ten-minute 1,000ft reels on projectors dating from 1951. Three projectionists were on duty, one with his hand on the projector dowsers, one preparing the second machine and a third rewinding. The projection room was equipped with sprinklers, reinforced steel doors and a network of ceiling cables that control two guillotine-like steel gates over the portholes.

Source unknown; sent in by Carl Chesworth

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



The Vienna State Opera House in May 2012

Paramount Pictures teamed up with **IMAX** to transform the 19th Century **Vienna State Opera House** into a cinema for the première of *Mission Impossible Rogue Nation* on 23 July; the movie was largely filmed in the Austrian capital. The project involved fitting two **IMAX** digital projectors in the Emperor's Box at the rear of the auditorium. Just like a normal **IMAX** cinema, both projectors were used at the same time to enhance the brightness of the image. A 56ft by 37ft curved screen was installed in front of the stage. However, the horseshoe-shaped venue held its own challenges; different speakers to normal had to be used. 1,000 guests attended the showing. A time-lapse video of the transformation can be seen at: [youtu.be/n8iXw-bOkhM].

Projectorpoint – 8 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth

CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II* Listed

A revised application has been presented which ameliorates some deficiencies of the original scheme relating to proposed alterations to the **Avenue** in London's Northfields area. The Association has been represented at a meeting with the local conservation officer and the applicant; a further joint consultation is likely. See p6 last Bulletin.



Antic Limited was recently due to submit planning and listed building consent applications relating to the **Granada / EMD** at Walthamstow, although it is not known if concerns over joint operation as a hostelry and drama space have yet been satisfactorily resolved with the proposed tenant, Soho Theatre Company. *Photo above taken April 2004.*

Grade II Listed



In Brighton, an application has been tabled for the replacement of the **Astoria** with a tripartite, seven-storeyed, structure. Consideration is being given to requesting salvage of architectural elements and an interior photographic survey. *Photo above taken March 2009*

Concern arises over the recent closure of the **Ritz** in Grays. Often overlooked in favour of its more celebrated neighbour, the **State**, the **Ritz** is an impressive structure in its own right, boasting an admirable auditorium. Picture on front cover of last Bulletin.

Partial demolition of **Smart's Picture Palace / Rex / Essoldo** in London's Bethnal Green has been approved in order for construction of residential units to be undertaken, despite representations from the CTA and other bodies. It will be recalled that an outcome of this ilk had been anticipated following the rejection of the listing application for the cinema. Picture on p5 Bulletin 49/3.

... more Casework in the full Bulletin

The Projected Picture Trust

Dean Clough Mills, HALIFAX, HX3 5AX

The Projected Picture Trust exists to locate and preserve projectors and related film equipment, both professional and domestic. Since 1978 enthusiastic volunteers have been happy to help restore these items and so preserve **THE MAGIC OF CINEMA**.

The Trust provides help and assistance to non-commercial community cinemas and museums exhibiting film related artefacts.

The Museum of Cinema Technology has perhaps the largest collection of all types of film equipment in the UK. The Data Archive holds over 3,000 items including press cuttings, manuals and film related technical documents. We are presently looking to strengthen our management team...

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU ARE ABLE TO HELP
or if you would like to become a member only.

contact@ppttrust.org

www.ppttrust.org

A **MUST** for your collection

CINEMAS IN BRITAIN

A History of Cinema Architecture

by Richard Gray

First published in 1996 to celebrate the centenary of cinema in the UK. In this fully revised edition, the text has been completely rewritten and expanded and there are extra photographs, 10 in full colour. Of particular interest is the 24-page gazetteer of cinema buildings, telling the reader what there is to see in most places in the UK. There are useful appendices about listed cinemas, a glossary of architectural terms and a comprehensive bibliography.

Hardback, 180 pages, fully illustrated in b/w & colour.

Special price for CTA members

£29.50 + £6.00 postage from

Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer

34 Pelham Road, Wood Green, London, N22 6LN

(Publisher's price £45)

London's West End Cinemas

by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.

Large format paperback, 210 pages, fully illustrated
with over 400 pictures, including 71 in colour.

Special price to members – £20.00 + £3 postage.



This is a redesigned and much enlarged third edition of a book not available for more than 20 years, fully updated by its original author, Allen Eyles. It is a complete record of all the cinemas that have entertained picture-goers in the West End from 1906 to 2013. There are maps, appendices of club cinemas and theatres as temporary cinemas as well as a name index. Published in collaboration with English Heritage.

WANDERING TO WINCHESTER

By Ian Meyrick

A report of the CTA visit on 20 June,
organised by David Trevor-Jones and Richard Norman

The cover of the notes booklet for the CTA's first visit to Winchester, ancient capital of Wessex and England, proudly displayed a full-colour illustrated poster issued by the London and South Western Railway in the early years of the twentieth century. Sadly, the LSWR Company's modern day successor nearly derailed the trip from the outset with delays and over-running engineering on some services carrying CTA members. Despite this, Mervyn's Coaches (driven by Mervyn himself in a monogrammed driver's cap) managed to pick the group up in two tranches and keep us to our schedule.



The Everyman/Screen in Winchester

Our first visit was to the **Screen** in Southgate Street. Opened in 1996 and subsequently taken over by the **Everyman** Group, this comfortable two-screen cinema was created within the former Guards' Chapel in the now-closed Peninsula Barracks. A listed building, the two back-to-back cinemas (214 and 176 seats) have exposed brick walls and timber rafters, with raked floor, spacious seating and good-sized screens. Projection is by Sony 4k digital projection from a central projection room. Although we are now very familiar with cinemas being converted to churches, the conversion of chapels and churches to cinemas has of course been a feature from the earliest days of film presentation.



The Palace Alton

Back onto the coach and off to Alton's **Palace** Cinema, where we were welcomed by the owner, Mr Raj Jeyasingam, former manager of the bingo at the **Granada** Tooting. Opened as the **Picture Theatre** in 1914, with a typical semi-circular frontage over a divided shop-front style entrance, it converted to sound in 1931. It was refurbished four years later and renamed the **Palace**. The current



An old postcard of the **Palace** Alton [Tony Moss Collection]

bland frontage is typical of modernisation schemes in the 1960s and probably dates from then. Early in the 1970s, part-time bingo was introduced and, after closure during 1984-88, the circle was extended forward to provide a 111-seat cinema, with bingo in the front stalls area. The present owner, Raj, told us that he bought the building in 1995 and in 2003 introduced a second 60-seater screen in the unused rear stalls area. The demand for bingo has reduced to such an extent that the bingo operation was due to close the week after our visit. Raj plans to wall-off the two screens and sell the rear part of the building for redevelopment, continuing to run the two screens as cinemas.



Part of the CTA group having lunch in **St John's House**

All aboard for Winchester! Our next stop was the oldest building on the tour, **St John's House**, Broadway, a Grade I Georgian building with a hall for assemblies, concerts and banquets on the top floor. When this was heightened, false windows were painted on to preserve the proportions of the building – one is painted slightly open to reveal a pot of paint and brush! Opened as the **Palace Theatre**, a ciné-variety hall, by brothers John and James Simkins in 1910, it closed in 1914 to make way for the Simkins' new venture, the **Theatre Royal**. The top floor is now a banqueting suite, having fulfilled a number of functions over the years, including housing a historic battle enactment show including primitive animatronics. Lucky, original decorative plaster decoration survived all this excitement, including the projection ports for a single-projector set-up. Happily, we were able to combine our physical and aesthetic needs at the same time, as lunch was provided here.



The **Guildhall** Winchester

... read the remaining two pages of the report in the full Bulletin

NEWSREEL

The items in this section are taken mainly from press cuttings from local newspapers. Although their factual accuracy has been checked by Allen Eyles, there may be minor errors in reporting dates or other detail. Photos by Harry Rigby within entry, except where stated. A number in curly brackets {nnnnn} is the reference for the Cinema Treasures website. Go to: [cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn]

ABINGDON (Oxon)

The Council has turned down all bids to run a new two-screen cinema at the **Guildhall**. It has instead commissioned architects to draw up new plans to regenerate the building.

Oxford Mail – 6 July

ALDERSHOT (Hants)



The new owners of the former **Empire/Odeon** say it will be transformed into an entertainments venue with “no expense spared”. Refurbishment was due to start in late August with completion hoped for by Christmas. The name will revert back to **Empire**. It opened in October 1930 and was renamed **Odeon** in January 1964. It closed in October 1981 and was then used as a church but they moved out in August 2015. {4428} *photo taken April 2006*.

Aldershot News & Mail – 30 July, 6 August; sent in by Ken Roe

ANDOVER (Hants)

Odeon has apologised after eight pensioners were stuck in a lift for four hours, instead of watching *La Bohème*. The four-screen cinema (ex **Reel**) is situated above an Asda supermarket. The company confirmed that a similar accident happened a year ago. Since then the lift has been upgraded and the number of service visits increased.

Southampton Daily Echo, Andover Advertiser – 20 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

ASHFORD (Kent)

Plans for a ‘boutique’ cinema in Elwick Road in the town centre have gone on public display. No operator or size of venue have been named; earlier proposals suggested five screens. There is already a twelve-screen **Cineworld** on the outskirts of the town.

Kentish Express – 23, 30 July, 6 August; *KM Extra* – 5 August

BANBURY (Oxon)

The building that houses the two-screen **Odeon** was auctioned on 9 July. It sold for £2.2m, which was above the guide price of £1.9m. The operation of the cinema is unaffected by the sale; the lease goes on until 2032 with a right to renew for a further 10 years. The cinema opened as the **Regal** in October 1940 with 897 seats. By 1946 it was operated by Southan Morris and it became an **Essoldo** in May 1956. In 1972 it was taken over by **Classic** and they twinned it. {24126}

Banbury Guardian – 30 June; *Banbury Cake* – 2 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth; photo [top next column] taken February 2004

BARRY (Vale of Glamorgan)

Developers have until 30 September to submit proposals for a multiplex cinema at the Innovation Quarter. The last cinema, the **Theatre Royal** closed in 2008 and was demolished in 2012.

Barry & District News – 2 July



The Odeon (ex **Regal** / **Essoldo** / **Classic**) Banbury

BIRMINGHAM (NEC)

The new eleven-screen **Cineworld** is due to open in October. A recruitment day for prospective employees has been held.

Muslim Weekly – 7 August

BLACKPOOL (Lancs)



The former **ABC**, last used as **Syndicate** nightclub, has finally been demolished. The delays cost the Council £116,000; the sum represents the loss of income due to the site’s failure to be converted into a 59-space car park. The cinema was rebuilt in 1963 with live theatre capabilities; these were lost when it was tripled in 1981. Films ceased in December 1998. {25501}

Blackpool Gazette – 6 July; photo [as **Syndicate** nightclub] taken June 2009

BLAENAU FFESTINIOG (Gwynedd)

Grants totalling £90,000 have enabled a digital cinema installation in the old Magistrates’ Court building. The operator said it is not intended to develop the venue as a full-time cinema but rather an “art house” style.

Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald – 11 June; *Cambrian News* – 18 June

BLYTH (Northumberland)

The conversion of the grade II listed former **Wallaw** into a Wetherspoon’s pub was highly commended at the Campaign for Real Ale [CAMRA] and English Heritage pub design awards. {1826}

The Journal (Newcastle) – 7 July; *News Post Leader* – 9 July; sent in by Frank Manders

BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)

Plans for a multiplex as part of the town’s regeneration scheme have been dropped due to lack of public interest.

West Sussex Gazette – 8 July

BOLTON

A giant crane has been brought in from Poland to work on the new nine-screen 1,200-seat **Light** cinema, part of the Market Place development. It is expected to open on 18 December. The auditoria will range from 80 to 270 seats.

Bolton News – 27 June; *Bolton Journal* – 16 September

BRADFORD (West Yorks)

Trustees at the **National Media Museum** have objected to plans [trailed on p18 of the last Bulletin] for a new six-screen cinema as part of the Broadway development. They claim it will jeopardise the future of their venue.

Telegraph & Argus (Bradford) – 18 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BURNHAM-ON-SEA (Somerset)

A new 77-seat third screen costing £150,000 is to be added this autumn to the **Ritz**. Last year it celebrated the tenth anniversary of its reopening. It is unclear where the new screen will be; the two existing screens in the former circle have 125 and 98 seats. A social club operates in the former stalls. Photo on front cover. {3291}

Burnham & Highbridge Weekly News – 16 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BURY (Lancs)

The Compton organ from the **Art Cinema** is currently being installed at Llanelli Presbyterian Church in South Wales. It lived in the cinema from 1933 until the 1960s then was put in storage until 2008.

Bury Times – 13 August; sent in by Philip Crompton

CAMPBELTOWN (Argyll & Bute)

Only £2,000 more needs to be raised to complete the restoration of the A-listed **Picture House**. With more than £3m already in the pot, a reopening date has been set for February 2017. Tenders have been received and work is due to start in November or December. {16090}

Campbeltown Courier – 12 June

CANTERBURY (Kent)



The **Electric** (1911) has re-opened again, this time as the Gourmet Burger Kitchen. This is quite a large chain, not just in London. The interior is intact but less of an early cinema feel as it is serving up American burgers as fast as possible, with rather brash décor.

Sent in by Martin Tapsell; photo taken April 2004

CHELTENHAM (Glos)

The art deco 'silver ladies' rescued from the front of the **Gaumont Palace / Odeon** when it was demolished have been given a new home at The Brewery, which houses an eleven-screen **Cineworld**.

Gloucestershire Echo – 23 July; sent in by John Elliot

CHIPPENHAM (Wilts)

Further to my article in the May/June Bulletin, the former **Palace** reopened on 8 August as a nightclub called... The **Palace**. The scaffolding went up about a month ago to repaint the outside and high-light the old **Palace** sign. The inside has been totally revamped and can hold up to 600 people. The manager has said that the new club will be "well run and trouble free" but there is still a lot of opposition from local residents. The one thing that intrigues me is that the old 1920s lamp holder over the **Palace** sign has been retained – it does not work and there has been no other lighting put up to illuminate the signage?

Sent in by David Reeves

CHORLEY (Lancs)

There are concerns that the community cinema at the **Empire** could close if plans for a six-screen **Reel** go ahead. Plans were due to go before councillors in mid-July.

Chorley Citizen – 15 July

COCKERMOUTH (Cumbria)



Smeatons of Cockermouth are inviting offers around £465,000 for the **Grand Theatre**. Restaurant or shop use is envisaged, but Lime-lighting lease the auditorium area with its curved ceiling for another six years. The **Grand** was a theatre with a 25 foot deep stage (although no flytower) dating from 1915, but mostly operated as a cinema, latterly with the Graves circuit booking the films. After closure in 1966 it was converted to retail use. The CTA visited at Easter 1995, when it was a veterinary surgery, now gone. Photos of interior are on the Smeatons website [tinyurl.com/q5qrskd]. {49789}

Sent in by Martin Tapsell; photo is a composite of two taken February 2007

CORBY (Northants)

The six-screen 900-seat **Savoy** opened on 31 July; it is equipped with Dolby Atmos. The first film was *Mission Impossible 5*. It is the fourth cinema in the chain, which has branches in Nottingham, Boston (Lincs) and Worksop (Notts).

Corby Evening Telegraph – 18 June, 2 July

CROOK (Durham)

The group formed to save the former **Empire** has launched an appeal to raise £150,000 to buy the building. Many of the original features are still in place. It is currently used as a motor accessories shop. See p20 Bulletin 49/3. {43148}

Weardale Gazette – 17 June

DARLINGTON

A 24-hour licence has been granted for the new nine-screen **Vue** at the new Oval Centre, despite objections from local residents. The cinema is expected to open in February.

Northern Echo – 16, 29 July

DEAL (Kent)

The campaign group wanting to see the former **Regent** reopen have set up a website [www.reopentheregent.com] to further their cause. It contains a history of the building and many pictures.

East Kent Mercury – 30 July; sent in by Martin Tapsell

DONCASTER (South Yorks)

Savoy Cinemas is to operate the new six-screen 984-seat cinema planned for the Civic and Cultural Quarter. Subject to approval, building will start early next year with completion by the end of 2016.

Doncaster Free Press – 23 July

DORCHESTER (Dorset)

The freehold of the four-screen **Plaza** has been bought by the operator, Adam Cunard. The 1933 building has benefitted from more than £1 investment over the last seven years, including refurbishment of the foyer, re-carpeting and additional soundproofing. All screens are digital, have air conditioning and have been re-seated with comfortable high-back leather-effect chairs. Further work is planned, including reinstalling tabs in screen ① (the former circle). The cinema is said to be doing better than the recently-opened three-screen **Odeon**. Admission prices are £3.50 at weekends and £2.50 during the week. {15143}

Dorset Echo – 21 August;

additional information from John Pilblad & Mike Whitcombe

... seven more pages of cinema news
from all over the UK in the full Bulletin



CINEMA BUSINESS

CINEWORLD

Cineworld, which has 107 UK sites including the **Picturehouse** brand, has reported total revenues up 11% in the UK and Ireland. Box Office returns rose 10½% and retail sales by 10.8% in the 26 weeks to 2 July. Pre-tax profits jumped to almost £47m and prices rose by 5.2%. **Cineworld** also has 1,927 screens across Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Israel. Box Office takings grew in almost every region, helping push total group revenue up 11.2%.

*Daily Telegraph, The Independent, Financial Times – 8 July;
Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, The Sun – 14 August;
sent in by Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton*

BAA-VELLOUS

Shaun the Sheep Movie was the highest grossing UK Independent film in the first half of 2015, taking £13.7m. Cinema attendance rose 10% to 83 million.

Daily Telegraph – 24 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BINGO PROFITS

Gala Coral revenues grew from £288m to £305m in the twelve weeks to 4 July, while gross profits grew by £8.1m to £216.4m. Revenue for the year to date was £988m, a rise of almost 50% on the previous year.

Rank Group, owners of Mecca Bingo, said pre-tax profits were up 19% to £74m while revenue had grown 3% to £700m.

[cityam.com] – 21 August; sent in by Keith Bye

ODEON HOPES

Losses at **Odeon/UCI** widened to £119.7m last year. Paid attendances fell 2% to 78.5m in 2014. In Spain, however, attendances rose 13.5% thanks to the success of a local film. Meanwhile in the UK, visitor numbers fell by 4.9%. Earnings before tax fell by 23% to £53m with turnover down 7% to £657m. First quarter results for 2015 show admissions improved by 12.2%. Odeon said the removal of card handling fees also helped to boost bookings.

[cityam.com] – 17 August; sent in by Keith Bye & Richard Norman

ODEON TRIVIA



The **Odeon** Lincoln at night in September 2003

The **Odeon** Lincoln has received more than £1.2m in evening parking fees from Lucy Tower Street car park, part of an agreement when it moved to its Brayford Wharf site in 2001.

The **Odeon** Manchester not only sold more alcohol than any other **Odeon** in the UK but also managed to sell the second highest number of tickets during the opening weekend of *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

Celluloid Junkie – 20 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

PINEWOOD REELS

Pinewood Studios says it is forced to turn away potential blockbusters because of lack of space. It is building four new stages that will increase its capacity by 25%. Annual revenues rose from £65m to £75m while profits soared 40% to £5m. The amount the company received in Film Tax relief was £4m, around £1m more than last year.

STREAMING DEAL

US Cinema Chain **AMC** and Canadian company **Cineplex** have struck a deal to allow Paramount Studios to offer a couple of trial titles to home viewers 17 days after they appear in theatres. Paramount is planning to approach other cinema chains to see if they will take the two films on similar terms. In return, exhibitors will get a cut of the rental income for 90 days. Rival Netflix is a proponent of simultaneous releasing.

The Guardian – 9 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

CHINA CINEMA GROWTH

The first six months of 2015 saw an addition of 600 new cinemas with 2,449 screens, putting the total in China to 26,244. This is an average daily growth rate of 13½ screens! However the rate is slowing down; the year-on-year screen growth fell by 6.4%, having increased by 28.7% in the previous period. Starting with a high of 126 cinemas and 567 screens in January 2015, this figure fell every month to just 54 cinemas and 295 screens in July. The average number of screens per new cinema also dropped.

Celluloid Junkie – 3 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth

NIGERIA

IMAX has signed a deal with Filmhouse Cinemas for an **IMAX** cinema to be located in a new construction project in Lagos. This is the first ever **IMAX** agreement in Nigeria and West Africa, following deals in Angola and South Africa.

Digital Cinema Technology – 24 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

ODEON LAUNCHES INNOVATION LAB

Odeon and UCI Cinemas group will open its HQ once a month to nurture entrepreneurs to create products to improve the experience of cinema-goers. Start-ups will be able to collaborate with its commercial and IT teams and the best ideas will be tested in UK cinemas. If the London pilot is successful, the group will launch another innovation lab in Barcelona.

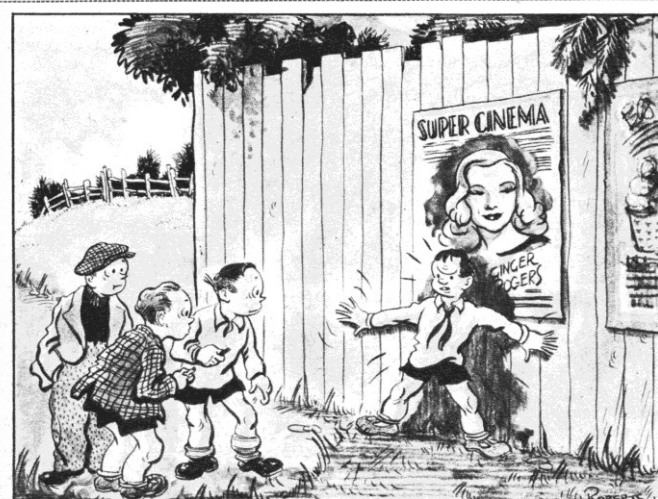
[startups.co.uk] – 24 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

70MM RESURRECTED

Quentin Tarantino has shot his latest film *The Hateful Eight* in 65mm and is to retrofit roughly 80-100 US theatres with 70mm equipment to show it. It is due for release on 25 December in 70mm and 35mm only, so those theatres still equipped to show film will have a head start; the digital release is scheduled for two weeks later. It is also rumoured that the next *Star Wars* film will have a 70mm release. Some UK cinemas are also re-installing 70mm and having occasional 70mm films – see p16.

[www.in70mm.com] – 23 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

CARTOON CORNER



from the Joyce Braddon collection of *Film Weekly*, 1938-1939

LETTERS

GHOST SIGNS



In 1979 I took the above picture of the side wall of the **Apollo** Cinema in Wimbledon when advert hoardings were removed. The sign has since been covered with more hoardings but part of the lettering is still visible. I do not know much about the **Apollo**. I believe that it was a short-lived silent house. In 1980 I went round the inside of the building. There was nothing to show that it had once been a cinema.

Kevin Wheelan

CUSTARD CREAM

This ghost sign [R] is in St John's Hill, Clapham Junction, London, not far from the former **Granada**. The Peterkin Mill was owned by J Arthur Rank and when it failed he went into the film business.

Sunday People – 5 April; [www.ghostsigns.co.uk]; sent in by Carl Chesworth



OLDEST CINEMA

Further to the information in the last Bulletin, the notion that the **Alexandra** Blackburn, was the world's first purpose-built cinema is one that has been promoted heavily in Blackburn. During my time there some forty years ago, there was a regular correspondent to the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* who continually maintained this – and that it opened in 1906 – to the extent that it has become almost holy writ and I note the newspaper is still perpetuating the myth. David Atwell, seeking information from the Blackburn Library in the 1970s, was nevertheless informed thus:-

“Definite evidence is difficult to find. Contrary to popular belief, the cinema did not open in 1906. Application for a licence was made in November 1908 and planning permission was sought from the Town Council in December 1908. Work probably began in 1909 and the owners were paying rates in that year. There exists a newspaper cutting suggesting that the cinema was opened on Easter Monday 1909 and a second cutting suggests Easter Tuesday 1909. Extensive checks of newspapers for the Easter period 1909 and 1910 do not confirm this and the first advertisement giving details of the cinema's programmes did not appear in the *Blackburn Weekly Telegraph* until 1913. Although we are unable to provide the exact date of opening it seems probable that the Alexandra Hall, a purpose-built cinema, was in operation sometime during the year 1909.”

It seems fairly definite that the cinema closed for renovation in 1954 and it apparently continued on films until 1962, when it became a bingo hall operated by the Hutchinson Leisure Group. In the 1970s it was reconverted to a cinema for a while, showing Asian films. Its original nickname '**Penks**' came from the name of its first proprietors, the Pendleton brothers.

Charles Morris

I was born in Blackburn in 1943 about a mile away from the **Alexandra** Cinema, locally known as '**Penk's**', I presume named after the then owner. A very small cinema, I used to visit it in the late 50s and early 60s. Today it would probably be termed as *bijou*! It was on Dock Street and backed onto the Leeds and Liverpool canal at Eanam Wharf. A vertical red neon sign spelt out its name over the corner entrance. The box office and foyer were very small and a door led into the stalls area by the screen. Opposite was a staircase rising from the stalls to a small balcony. Decoration was almost absent. If the screen masking needed altering between films, the projectionist would walk down from the box in the rear balcony into the stalls and disappear backstage to do the job manually. After it closed, it eventually became a carpet warehouse/shop. I was always told it was the first purpose-built cinema in the country but now there is some dispute if that was so. It was certainly one of the first if not the first. I understand it was 'modernised' in the early 1950s and that is the interior I remember. Over Eanam, on the main Accrington to Blackburn road, was The **Victoria** Cinema locally known as **Charnley's**, also believed to be named after the once owner. Again this backed onto the canal. It was larger than the **Alexandra** and had been converted from a brewery. Sad to say, it subsided and collapsed during one night as the original wells from the brewery days caved in. I walked past it next day. A sorry sight. Luckily it had closed for the night and there were no injuries. There were many cinemas in the town, now either demolished or turned into other uses. As a youth in the early days of cinema, my grandfather had a part-time job taking advertising slides from cinema to cinema to be projected on the screen. After they had been used in one cinema, he had to quickly make his way to another one so that they could project them! Both '**Penk's**' and **Charnley's** are now long gone.

David Aspinall, Chief reporter for *Old Theatres* magazine.

BLUEBELL AND GREAT YARMOUTH

Many thanks for the last Bulletin – a great read, as usual. Allen Eyles' picture quiz on p30 – I think is the advert at Horsted Keynes Station on the Bluebell Railway; well worth a visit.



Have just got back from a week's holiday in Great Yarmouth. I noticed the former **Regent** (last used for Mecca Bingo) is still open as Stars nightclub; it opens at 10:00pm. It still has the Mecca carpets in the foyer. The **Empire** on the front facing the beach is still To Let and has been so for a long time

Malcolm GamblesWinchester Thanks

... more letters in the full Bulletin

HOLIDAY SNAPS

By Trevor Haynes & Chris Godbold

We've just returned from a short trip to France. This was mainly to cover some minor but scenic railway lines but we also called in to a few towns in Normandy as well as Rennes (Brittany) and were surprised to see so many cinemas still in operation.

Most of the cinemas are in notable buildings and seem to remain in operation. We're afraid that **Cineville** in Rennes, however, does demonstrate the underlying depression in that town (in spite of the smarter **Gaumont** in Esplanade General de Gaulle).



Le Drakkar, Dives, Normandy



Gaumont, Rennes, Brittany



L'Ambience, Blonville-sur-Mer, Normandy



Le Normandy, Argentan, Normandy



Cinema Morny, Deauville, Normandy



Cinéville, Rennes, Brittany



Cinema, Cabourg, Normandy