



CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

[www.cta-uk.org](http://www.cta-uk.org)

# BULLETIN

Vol 50 No 4

July / August 2016



The Picture Palace in Ponders End [Enfield] – one of the pubs for sale by JD Wetherspoon; photos taken March 2016



## FROM YOUR EDITOR

Many thanks to all of you who responded to my requests in the last Bulletin and at the AGM for more articles and holiday snaps. I now have so many that I have only been able to print some in this edition; some I have held over for the next edition and maybe the one after that. I have tried to use them in the order I received them; rest assured I will print them all – eventually.

We had a suggestion that the CTA website address on the masthead was not prominent enough. It was in the same type as the full name of the CTA; I have now made it bigger and put it in the same colour as the logo – I hope this gives it the emphasis it deserves.

You will notice opposite that most of the Committee now have a CTA e-mail address. Please use [info@cta-uk.org] if uncertain to whom to address an e-mail enquiry; this address will be monitored and e-mail redirected if necessary. This is a new system so please allow time for a response.

Something went wrong in preparing the proofs for printing the last edition – pages 3 & 4 got swapped over. This meant that some of the cross references were wrong. I hope you managed to sort this out. I must get a new elastic band for my computer.

*Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor*

## HOLIDAY SNAPS



This is a small modern cinema I snapped on holiday in Brittany, Cinema Le Rex. It was closed so couldn't get in to check it out. I can't remember the exact town but it was on the Crozon peninsular.

*John Wojowski*

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

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Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer

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## CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(founded 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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**CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION**

**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]

## VISITS AND EVENTS

### A Day in the City of Bath

Monday 8 August; Organised by Mike Wood

Our walking tour of the cinemas of Bath has attracted more interest than the organiser expected and regrettably no more bookings can be taken to ensure that the group is a manageable size.

### Wandering to Winchester – Rewind

Saturday 3 September 2016 – **CANCELLED**

CTA trips are rarely if ever repeated and unfortunately our prospective rewind *Wander to Winchester* will not be taking place. Regrettably too few takers have expressed interest in doing it to be able economically to repeat the trip in its original form. If any members who did not express an interest after the announcement in the May/June Bulletin wishes they had done and would like to get in touch with David Trevor-Jones by email [david.trevorjones@btopenworld.com] he will keep the numbers under review and might try the idea again at a later date.

### Coming Soon

Film Returns to the Tooting **Granada**

Friday 18 November



After a gap of 43 years as a bingo club, a very exciting event – the CTA in collaboration with the Tooting History Group are to present a film in the later evening of Friday 18 November by kind permission of Gala Bingo Clubs and the manager at Tooting. This is also to celebrate the award of the Asset of Community Value [ACV] status, which happened last December. At the moment, only the date can be announced but not the film, although it may well be *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* with its late night-theme and Gothic atmosphere, appropriate for Komisarjevsky's amazing interior. More information in the next Bulletin.

Richard Gray

### 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.

**Most visits are for members only**  
**Details in the full Bulletin**

## CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

### Grade II\* Listed

The application for the mandatory permissions required prior to the commencement of work to convert the **State** at Grays into a JD Wetherspoon establishment has reportedly been delayed, although preliminary operations to remove asbestos have apparently begun. The Association is to press for the retention of the spatial identities of the distinguished foyers as separate and distinct from the auditorium. It will also suggest that the long-disused lighting troughs traversing the ceiling of the latter be relit; accomplishing this with LED lighting would prove cost effective in its installation, power consumption and maintenance. {1837}

The trust of the **Electric Palace** at Harwich has requested the support of the CTA for its plans to repair and refurbish the property. This will be proffered and the opportunity taken to comment on the suitability of such proposals to the historic fabric of the cinema. {2597}

The refurbishment of the lower foyer of the **Odeon** at Muswell Hill has reportedly been carried out in acceptably sympathetic manner, despite the colour palette differing somewhat from the original scheme. It seems likely, however, that planning approval will be received for the two mini-cinemas, colloquially termed 'pods', which are intended to be sited in the rear corners of the circle. Thus focus is changing from outright objection to endeavours aimed at ameliorating their visual impact, ensuring that they are removable without damage to the listed interior and limiting planning permission to encompass only such period during which the building remains in cinema usage. {13783}

### Grade II Listed

A trust has been formed which aims to rehabilitate and run the **Royalty** at Harborne. However, there is no indication that the current owner is willing to relinquish ownership of the property and it is unlikely that the local Council will consider compulsory purchase of the building. {33866}



The **Dominion [Granada]** in Acton, owned by a church that had previously demonstrated interest in sympathetic restoration of the property, has been placed on the market at a purchase price of about three million pounds. A theatre production company has reportedly expressed interest in its acquisition. Bromige's fine façade survives; this masterfully integrates internal stair flights within its fenestrated extremes. Much of the original detailing of foyer and auditorium is also extant. It is thus imperative that the structure is treated sympathetically during any alterations for reuse; the Association will scrutinise closely plans for such work. {13831} *Photo taken April 2006.*

It appears from the planning and listed building consent applications relating to the **Ritz** at Grays that little more than re-painting and re-seating are proposed. The religious body involved in the scheme is that which owns the **Regal** at Camberwell. {22456}

**More Casework in the full Bulletin**



# PUBLICATIONS

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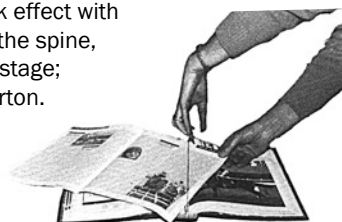
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Listed below are the back numbers of Picture House that are still available, along with the main articles the particular issue contains. There are also available a few second-hand copies of out-of-print issues 9, 10, 14/15, 16, 20, 22, 23 & 24, priced £5.00 each, plus postage.

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From Celluloid to Cereal

Cinemas That Became Supermarkets

by Gavin McGrath, 28 pages paperback, fully illustrated. £4.00 plus postage.

**STILL AVAILABLE BY THE SAME AUTHOR:**

From Pictures to Pints – Cinemas That Became Pubs

£4.00 plus postage.

Cinemas and Theatres of Tower Hamlets £6.99 plus postage

## Also still available

The Cinemas of RA Thomas by Mick Collins £24.95 plus postage.

Picture Mad – Andover's Cinemas by Philip Ray £7.50 plus postage.

The Magic Screen – A history of the Regent Street Cinema

£20.00 plus postage.

The Auditorium – In and around old North Warwickshire

by Peter Lea £12.95 plus postage.

Alpha to Odyssey – St Albans by Penny Dade £4.99 plus postage

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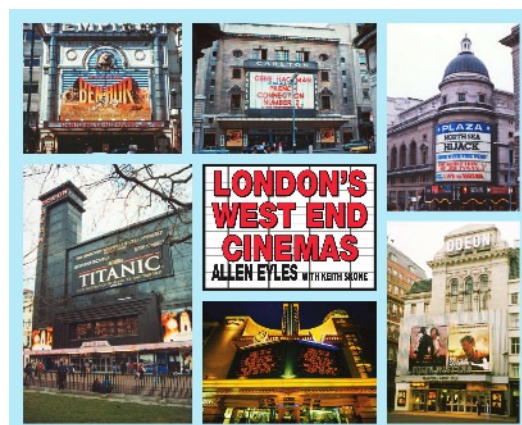
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## London's West End Cinemas

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.



# MEMORIES OF THE PYRAMID

## The Pyramid / Odeon / Tatton Cinema in Sale, Greater Manchester

By Richard Hagon



The Pyramid as LA Fitness in January 2006

In 1973 I became involved with the North Cheshire Amateur Operatic Society (NCAOS) as their Sound Engineer. Their usual home was the Palace Theatre in Manchester. However in early 1980 the theatre closed for major refurbishment; as a result, the society had to find alternative venues. And so it was that I first entered the Pyramid (by then the Tatton Cinema) in November 1982 for our production of *Hello Dolly*. This was to be the first of several productions we would present at this venue over the next few years. The interior was completely untouched and a sight to behold. However the Christie Theatre Organ had long since been removed (see later in this article). The stage was raked, which created a few challenges for both the stage staff and performers. All the lighting and sound equipment had to be brought in especially for the show, which involved a great deal of climbing up vertical ladders backstage and negotiating the long narrow gantry above the auditorium ceiling. This was long before 'Health & Safety' took hold so there were no safety harnesses or hard hats!

The projection box, where two follow spots were installed, was accessed through a door at the end of the roof space, across a flat roof and then through another door and down a vertical ladder – a journey I became very familiar with! During one production a follow spot developed a fault. So gazing around the projection box our chief electrician spied a very old arc-type small follow spot, which must have been used in the early years. Despite its dusty state and dubious electrics, this was promptly powered up and, accompanied by a great deal of smoke and burning smell, there was light. In April 1984, 15 minutes before first night curtain-up for a production of *My Fair Lady*, my reel-to-reel tape machine developed a fault. So I hastily called home (a mile or two up the road) to ask my father to bring another machine. He arrived about half an hour later without getting a speeding ticket and all was well. But for me that was a very long half hour and I only missed one sound effect.

We enjoyed our time at the Tatton Cinema, it had a great atmosphere and audiences really enjoyed the Egyptian and Art Deco style interior.

### ABOUT THE CINEMA

The following is an extract from the book *A History of Sale* by NV Swain, with additional material by David Alldred of the Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust.

*"... Undoubtedly the most splendid cinema in Sale was the Pyramid on Washway Road; this was designed by Drury and Gomersall in an 'Egyptian' style, hence the name. The Pyramid was built 1933-4 to seat 2,000 at a cost of £70,000. The building included a first-floor café advertised as the "rendezvous for discerning folk" and, flanking the cinema, two rows of shops were built in a style that harmonised with the nearby Post Office.*

*Once built, the Pyramid then needed a license to open; the magistrates refused this after opposition from, among others, the Palace and Savoy cinemas and the Regal Altrincham. A protest meeting was organised by a local committee, which included the vicar of St Paul's. The meeting was a success, as the Pyramid's 2,000 seating*

*capacity was filled and another 2,000 gathered outside; a petition had attracted 18,000 signatures.*

*The result was that a license was then granted and the Pyramid was opened for its first public performance on Monday 26 February 1934 with a film and stage show. It is a cinema typical of prosperous suburbia of the 1930s and was built with a spacious car park. The Pyramid was bought by Rank in 1941 and later became an Odeon cinema. The Odeon showed its last film in October 1981; the cinema was sold and later re-opened as the Tatton, finally closing in 1984."*

The frontage, although not particularly Egyptian in overall design, does have various Egyptian-style mouldings and fluted pillars. Internally, the Egyptian theme was again largely mouldings and finishes, unlike Grauman's Egyptian. The theme was included in the specially designed Christie Organ [R]. This organ was purchased by The Lancastrian Theatre Organ Trust in the early 1980s and installed in the Blue Coat School in Oldham, where it was used for regular concerts until 2008. The organ is now in storage awaiting a new venue for installation.



In 1981, the Rank organisation closed 29 of its Odeon cinemas and the Tatton Cinemas group bought the lease for the Odeon Sale and it was renamed Tatton Cinema. Stage shows returned to the theatre; however the running costs caused the lease to revert to Rank in 1984 and the building was closed.



The Pyramid during its time as an Odeon

Trafford Borough Council purchased the cinema for £200,000 but by 1987 the costs to the Council were estimated at £1.5 million. A campaign was started to save it from demolition.



The interior of the Pyramid as LA Fitness in April 2003

In 1988 the theatre was advertised for sale by tender and by 1990 the cinema was converted into an American-themed nightclub, known as JFK's (quite how the Egyptian theme lent itself to this is anyone's guess!). The nightclub closed around 2001 and the auditorium has since been transformed into a franchised LA Fitness Centre, using a former front stalls exit as its entrance. The main entrance and foyers are currently unused.

The Pyramid Theatre was designated a Grade II Listed building in November 1987.



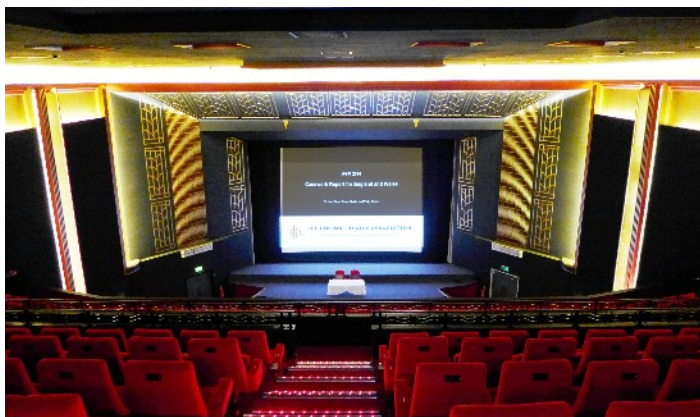


# ST ALBANS AGM AND ODYSSEY VISIT

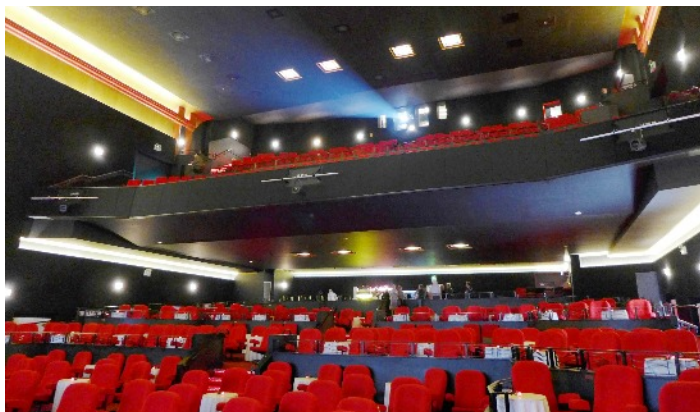
7 May 2016 – By Mike Wood & Ian Meyrick



It must be a tricky decision about where to go and what will entice the wider membership to turn out for the formal requirements of the Annual General Meeting, any hot controversies notwithstanding. This year your correspondent, instead of just doing the easy bit of turning up on the day and expecting to be entertained, was locked into a negotiating impasse over one option that stubbornly refused to run, when Ray Ritmeester suggested St Albans where the revived Odyssey (ex Odeon/Regent/Poly/Capitol) was settling down nicely after its re-opening in late 2014, with the additional draw of the St Albans Organ Theatre nearby.



The Odyssey is of course known to us for its connection with James Hannaway, who did such a splendid job of bringing the Rex Berkamstead back to life. The St Albans location was a bigger proposition and the project took five years and involved a number of setbacks for additional funding and other issues not unexpected for a major restoration. Some of us had already taken a look on the open day at around the time of the first strip-back of the sub-divisions. The first impression was deceptive since the site slopes steeply downhill at the rear and entry is at Circle level. There was clearly a lot of work to be done but the result is first class, as you would expect if you have been to Berkhamstead.



The Foyer is now a spacious café/bar and stairs down to the Stalls reveal another large bar under the balcony, with three lower levelled areas for tables and chairs facing a fairly deep forestage and screen with tabs. The ante-proscenium walls now feature replica gold grille

panels but it is unclear whether these are based on the original 1931 scheme, as speculation suggests it may have been deco patterned paint effect. The 1931 Capitol had itself replaced the Alpha Picture Palace of 1927, which had been destroyed by fire.

The Circle is very comfortably seated cinema-style and the auditorium has restored vertical cove lighting, as could be seen quite late in the main screen after Odeon tripling, although probably not working by then. In the projection box there are two Barco digital projectors with currently no film projection facility. For our visit, we had the run of the place, except back-stage and tea, coffee and biscuits from the friendly young staff certainly helped the business of the AGM along nicely.

## and after lunch...

The afternoon visit was to the St Albans Organ Theatre. Now there are some for whom it seems that the cinema organ is not necessarily a thing of beauty and they were a little wary. They need not have worried, because this is the home of the fascinating Charles Hart Collection of mechanical musical instruments as well as home to two theatre pipe organs.



Our musical tour included demonstrations of dance organs by Decap of Antwerp; these large instruments – including real playing accordions, saxophones and drums on their elaborate carved frontages – provided the music for dancing in roadhouses, with patrons putting money into coin boxes to start the music. On a smaller scale, a café organ built by Arthur Bursens of Antwerp in 1947 would also play a tune for customers when a coin was put in. The largest instrument, a Mortier Organ from 1923, was travelled around towns and villages in Belgium together with a large tent, dance floor and bar with tables and chairs. A massive undertaking! *Photos opposite.*

Another 'penny-in-the-slot' machine was the Mills Violano-Virtuoso, combining an internal piano and a real violin in a glass case, played by mechanical fingers and small rotating wheels, which fell on the appropriate string. The result is an accurate albeit rather plaintive duet. Other instruments demonstrated included cylinder and disc music boxes of various sizes, an EMG gramophone with enormous acoustic horn, organettes and a singing bird in a cage. A Duo-Art reproducing piano (a sophisticated version of the familiar Pianola) not only reproduced the notes but also the touch and nuances of the performer.

And yes, not one but two theatre pipe organs, expertly played for us by CTA member David Warner. The three-manual ten-rank Wurlitzer Model 220 Special was originally installed in the Empire/Granada Edmonton and bought by Charles Hart in 1968. It has since been fully restored and is used regularly for concerts. Nearby is the very rare Rutt organ, originally built in 1935 for the Regal Higham's Park. Spurden-Rutt was a well-known maker of 'straight' pipe organs and decided to enter the theatre organ arena very late in the day. Only three were ever built, this being the only three-manual, with six ranks and a very smooth sound. The other two, both two-manual, were for the Palace Slough and the Super Oxford. The Slough organ was broken up but the Oxford organ survived in private hands in Woking and was recently put up for auction.

*with acknowledgement to Ian Grundy and his Cinema Treasures entries  
Photos by the authors & Harry Rigby*

## LINKS FOR MORE PHOTOS AND DESCRIPTION:

[[odysseypictures.co.uk/history](http://odysseypictures.co.uk/history)]

[[cinematreasures.org/theaters/18474](http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/18474)]





## SILVER SCREEN AT THE RITZ BELPER

By Dan Hayes [Belper News]

Film lovers who attend a Belper cinema that runs special Thursday morning screenings for older people say they wouldn't miss it for the world. The Ritz cinema on King Street has been running its 'Silver Screen' showings for ten years, during which time they have witnessed a significant increase in the number of films that are made with an older audience in mind. The films are all carefully selected by owner Amanda Mundin and local photographer Ashley Franklin, who also introduces the film to the eager audience.



The Ritz Belper

Amanda said, "We will have been open ten years in November and Silver Screen has been going on as long as we have – from day one. Ashley had just finished at Radio Derby and was doing film reviews for Saga Radio at the time. He had been interested in doing something for the over-50s for a while so we decided to start some special screenings. We look through the films that are coming up and pick out ones we think they might like but we always like to put on a range of things, not just ones specifically marketed to seniors. So we had *Hail Caesar* recently and we have *Jungle Book* coming up but also have all the Oscar films like *Spotlight* and we had *Star Wars* when it came out. It's not just exclusively older people though – we also have younger people coming in and mothers with babies."

The building itself dates from 1882 and was first made into a cinema in the 1930s. It was then closed in 1992 before Amanda reopened it as the Ritz in 2006. Her family now run three cinemas; The Ritz in Belper, The Regal in Melton Mowbray and The Savoy in Stockport with two of her sons taking the reins at the Regal and the Savoy.

"There has definitely been an increase in cinema-going for the over-45s in the last few years." Says Amanda. "There are figures from the BFI which show that and the fact that films like *Philomena*, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, *The King's Speech* and *The Queen* exist is testament to that."

The customers we spoke to certainly valued what Amanda and Ashley provide. Kevin Doar, 67, from West Hallam, said: "We love it. My wife and I go with another couple, making a party of four. We go pretty much every Thursday unless we are away and have been doing that for about six or seven years – you get to know people from all over so as well as the film it is a social thing – even if the film isn't that good it is a good experience – the people are so friendly. We've also been on trips to Amanda's cinema in Melton Mowbray and hope to go to her other one as well."

In terms of last week's offering, *Eddie the Eagle*, Kevin said it was much better than he thought it would be. Gill Hancock, from Stanley Common, is also full of praise for 'Silver Screen'. "We love the atmosphere and the friendliness of the people," she says. We have got to know people as we queue up and Amanda and all the staff are very welcoming to us. We get to see different films than we would do normally – some are really good and some not so good. Some of the bigger cinemas have started to do a similar thing but you wouldn't get the same atmosphere at a multiplex." Gill said that *Eddie the Eagle* was entertaining and light but that the previous week's film, *Room*, was excellent. She added, "Amanda picks a good range of films for us and Ashley's introductions tell us a bit about the film before it starts, which is really helpful."

Silver Screen takes place every Thursday morning at The Ritz on King Street, Belper from 10am. For more information visit: [www.ritz-belper.co.uk](http://www.ritz-belper.co.uk) or call 01773 822224.

Reprinted with permission from the Belper News;  
Organised by Christopher Smith



The audience waiting for a Silver Screen presentation at the Ritz and enjoying free tea and biscuits beforehand



# 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. Allen has also provided additional comments, where indicated. 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](http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn)

## ABERYSTWYTH (Ceredigion)



The grade II listed Coliseum is preparing to reinstall a full-size screen and projector. It opened in 1905 with 800 seats on three levels. It has two horseshoe-shaped balconies above the main level, which is on the first floor of the building with shops underneath. It was a full-time cinema from 1932 until 1976 and was converted to become the town's museum in 1982. See p9 Bulletin 44/4. {22905}

*Western Mail* – 23 April; photo taken September 2012

## ASHFORD (Kent)

The proposed cinema complex development at Elwick Place has been taken over by the Council. No operator has been named.

*Kentish Express* – 21 April; *Ashford Herald* – 28 April

## BALA (Gwynedd)



The Neuadd Buddug reopened in May after being closed more than a year when 35mm film became less available. £55,864 has been invested in a digital projector and sound system, a new disabled access ramp and an accessible toilet. It will remain open for a transitional period until a new cultural facility becomes ready in the new community school in 2018.

*Cambrian News* – 26 May; sent in by Hugh Sykes; photo taken June 2011

## BANGOR (Gwynedd)

The developer behind the proposed multiplex at Parc Bryn Cegin says there is a strong interest from cinema operators and negotiations are going well with two of them.

*Bangor Mail* – 11 May

## BARNESLEY (South Yorks)

Empire Cinemas has signed up to operate a ten-screen 1,244-seat cinema to be built on the roof of the Alhambra Centre. Planning permission was granted in November 2014. The Council has alternative plans for a multiplex on a site close to the new Market Square.

*Barnsley Chronicle, Yorkshire Post* – 6 May; sent in by Carl Chesworth

## BLACKBURN (Lancs)

The Thwaites Empire Theatre cancelled all April shows after part of the ceiling collapsed on stage whilst 90 children were rehearsing. The venue was a cinema until the 1970s. {34995}

*The Stage* – 21 April; sent in by R David Simpson

## BLACKPOOL (Lancs)

An 18-year-old man has been hospitalised after jumping from a balcony at the Grand Theatre during a performance of *Grease*. {36695}

*The Stage* – 9 June; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

The refurbishment of the circle area of the Regent is nearly ready and is scheduled to open on 29 July for a planned series of weekend movies. A list of ten films has been published, from which fans can choose the first night attraction. The venue has a Facebook page – search for “Regent Blackpool”.

Sent in by Barry Band & Ray Dolling

## BOURNEMOUTH

Readers have voted that the new West Central complex currently under construction is a “monstrosity worse than the IMAX”. The development will house a ten-screen cinema, a replacement for the Odeon and ABC in Westbourne Road. The IMAX was demolished a few years ago.

*Daily Echo (Bournemouth)* – 14 June; sent in by Philip Stevens

## BRIERLEY HILL (Dudley)

The Danilo failed to sell at auction on 26 May but is still available at £300,000. There are full details and some good photos on Cotton's auctioneers' website at [tinyurl.com/zsvkfsn](http://tinyurl.com/zsvkfsn). {37851}

Sent in by Ivan Harris & Norman Robins

## BRISTOL

The grade II listed former ABC Whiteladies reopened as the Everyman on 20 May. It has three screens, seating 243 in the former circle and 110 & 85 in the former rear stalls. It had been closed for 15 years. {849}

*Bristol Post* – 6, 17, 26 May; *Western Daily Press* – 12 April, 21 May

## CAERNARFON (Gwynedd)

Plans (reported on p16 of the last Bulletin) for two extra screens at the Galeri have been approved by the Council. The new screens are not expected to be fully operational until January 2018.

*Daily Post (Wales)* – 18 May; *Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald* – 25 May; sent in by Hugh Sykes

## CAISTOR (Lincs)

The organiser of the ‘All About You’ youth scheme says an independent community cinema project is currently “under development”. The town once had the 200-seat Crown cinema – does anyone know when that closed?

*Market Rasen Mail* – 13 April

## CANTERBURY (Kent)

The freehold of the two-screen Odeon (ex ABC) sold at auction on 19 May for £2,790,000, slightly less than the guide price of £2,850,000. The seller was an un-named major pension fund and the identity of the buyer has not been revealed. The operation of the cinema is unaffected as the lease runs until April 2032. The rent is £178,026 per annum. The particulars were still available on the auctioneers' [Acuitus] website at [tinyurl.com/htbdj46](http://tinyurl.com/htbdj46) at the time of going to press.

*Kentish Gazette* – 12 May

## CLACTON-ON-SEA (Essex)

Work has started on a £500,000 upgrade of the two-screen Century cinema. Screen ① capacity will drop slightly to 400 but the extra space will be used to install new high-backed leather seats and give more legroom. New luxury seats will be installed in screen ② and the sightlines improved. Both will be fitted with bigger screens and improved sound systems. The cinema will also be redecorated and new toilets fitted. {13442}

*Clacton Gazette* – 14 April



## COLCHESTER (Essex)

Plans have been submitted for a three-screen boutique cinema in the former Keddies department store; it will be operated by Curzon. The scheme was first announced in 2013.

*Daily Gazette – 28 April, 2 May; East Anglian Daily Times – 30 April*

Fresh plans have been unveiled to convert the former Odeon in Crouch Street into shops and apartments. It was bought by BluMarble Properties in early 2015; previous owners had submitted several plans for the building and nothing had happened. The façade will be preserved but it has not yet been decided if the auditorium would be demolished. The cinema closed in 2002. {17575}

*Daily Gazette – 5 May; Essex County Standard – 6 May*

Odeon, the operator of the eight-screen cinema in Head Street, has lodged an official objection to plans to build a twelve-screen out-of-town multiplex.

*Daily Gazette (Colchester) – 12 May; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## CRAIGAVON (Co Armagh, Northern Ireland)

The eight-screen Omniplex has celebrated its first birthday.

*Portadown Times – 1 April*

## DARLINGTON

Vue has insisted that progress of their new nine-screen cinema is on-track, despite the opening date being shifted several times; it is given as 23 June at the time your Bulletin went to press. Restaurants and a hotel on the Feetham site have already opened.

*Northern Echo – 11 May, 11 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## DARTFORD (Kent)

The thirteen-screen Showcase cinema at Bluewater will expand into the top floor and create four extra screens. No timescale has been given. {24663}

*Dartford Messenger – 19 May*

The proposed Paramount Theme Park on the Swanscombe Peninsula has had its launch date pushed back to 2021, two years later than planned. It could cost up to £2bn and be bigger than the London Olympic Park. It will include cinemas in addition to the usual theme park attractions. Planning permission will not be applied for until 2017. A local businessman has said he cannot find tenants for his properties because of the uncertainty.

*The i – 26 April; The Reporter – 9 June; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Reg Larkman*

## DEAL (Kent)

The Regent has been added to the CTA's list of Cinemas at Risk. The CTA website entry is quoted by the East Kent Mercury, who also report an online petition to the Dover District Council to reopen the cinema by the 'Reopen the Regent' campaign group. The owners have promised repairs to arrest the decay meantime, by ordering scaffolding.

*East Kent Mercury – 2 June; sent in by Martin Tapsell*

## DERBY

Fires at the derelict Hippodrome have cost the taxpayer more than £12,000 this year, a freedom of information request has revealed. Meanwhile, it has been announced that the Cathedral will host concerts, following the fire at the Assembly Rooms in 2013.

*Derby Telegraph – 3, 4, 5, 23 May; sent in by Peter Good*

## DOVER (Kent)

A contractor has been appointed for the new six-screen Cineworld at the St James development. A completion date has been set for autumn 2017.

*Dover Express – 26 May*

## DUBLIN (Ireland)

A nine-screen 1,535-seat Odeon opened on 16 October 2015, restoring cinema services to the working-class Dublin suburb of Finglas after very many years. It features an ISENSE screen with Dolby Atmos. It is located in a shopping mall, beside the M50 orbital motorway and this shot taken in May 2016 shows that the passing motorist is not being neglected.

*Sent in by Bob Bradshaw [photo]*



## DUDLEY

The demolition of the Hippodrome was delayed by the possible presence of bats. The Council wanted to flatten the theatre and replace it with a public open space. This could have been the last chance for campaigners to try to save it. However, the week after the bat announcement, local elections left a hung Council. UKIP says that saving the Hippodrome was one of the policies Labour agreed to consider in exchange for the purple party abstaining from the leadership vote. Now campaigners have been given a five-year lease on the building, giving them time to find the cash to reopen the theatre. They say it will be at least four years before it is open to the public again. The venue has stood empty since bingo ceased in 2009. {41631}

*Express & Star – 6, 13, 19 May, 13 June; The Stage – 9 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth, Ivan Harris, Chris Ingram, Barry Quinton, Norman Robins & R David Simpson*

## DURHAM

The Gates shopping centre is to be renamed Riverwalk as part of a major overhaul. It will include a six-screen Odeon cinema. The news came the day after Everyman exchanged contracts for a three-screen cinema to open by 2019 in the nearby Millgate House development.

*Northern Echo – 9 April; Durham Times – 15 April*



The Gala Theatre is to expand from two screens to four in a £450,000 makeover. It was opened by the Council in 2002 with a 500-seat live performance theatre and a 114-seat cinema with a giant screen and an 8/70 projector. In 2007 a second 72-seat screen was added. Picturehouse has been programming the cinemas since April last year and the new complex will be renamed The Durham Picturehouse from the autumn; the Council will continue to run the theatre. The existing screens will be refurbished. {24672}

*Northern Echo, The Journal (Newcastle) – 11 May; photo taken November 2006*

## EDINBURGH (Portobello)



An application has been submitted to demolish the Category C(s) listed former George cinema and replace it with flats. It opened as the County in March 1939 with 1,284 seats and films ceased in June 1974. It became a bingo hall, which still continues today.

*Edinburgh Evening News – 19 May; photo taken March 2004*

**Five more pages of news  
in the full Bulletin**



# LETTERS

## RESPONSES

I would like to comment on the letter from Ian Patterson in Bulletin 50/3 'BBC and Bedford Camden'.

The Hippodrome Great Yarmouth did not close in 1977 although in 1978 it was offered for sale and was bought by local firm Jay's Entertainments Ltd. It was not turned into a circus – it always was a circus and still is, one of the very few circus buildings still being used as such anywhere in the world. I detailed the history of the Hippodrome and other Yarmouth buildings in Bulletin 47/3, page 25.

*The London Nobody Knows* is the best known of the dozen or so books written and illustrated by the distinguished artist and critic Geoffrey Fletcher. For 28 years his distinctive little drawings appeared in the 'Peterborough' column of the *Daily Telegraph* alongside items about people and places in London. In February 1967 a paragraph mentioning the formation of the CTA was accompanied by Geoffrey's sketch of the Biograph Victoria. Geoffrey Fletcher was one of the original patrons of the CTA but his death in 2004 aged 81 went unacknowledged even though the *Telegraph* carried his obituary.

The film of *The London Nobody Knows* was actually made in 1967 but not released until January 1969, when it was shown with *Till Death Do Us Part*. Remarkably both were the work of the same director, Norman Cohen, who later went on to make the first feature film of *Dad's Army* and *Adolf Hitler, My Part in his Downfall* as well as *Stand Up Virgin Soldiers* and three of the four *Confessions of...* sex comedies for his great friend, producer Greg Smith. They had been friends since meeting in Bernard Delfont's office where Greg was the junior assistant of agent Billy Marsh and Norman was a client, going on to collaborate on an award-winning documentary *Brendan Behan's Dublin*.

Norma Cohen's uncles were both cinema managers. Louis Freedman ran the Odeon New Street Birmingham while Percy Freedman ran the ABCs Coleshill Street, New Street and Bristol Road Birmingham.

The Bedford Camden Town was run as a cinema by ABC between 1933 and 1933 when it was taken over by Harry Goodson. He staged the last show there *Circus Revusical* in January 1951. After that it became the first of London's theatres to be used as a television studio. *Turn It Up* starring Jewell and Warriss was televised live from there later that year followed by editions of *Music Hall* until 1952.

Although Geoffrey Fletcher sketched several music halls after they had closed – the Star Bermondsey, Queens Poplar, Collins Islington, Metropolitan Edgware Road and Royal West London, the Bedford was the only one still in existence when the film was made, although by then it was a wreck. Although the stage house and auditorium were demolished in 1968, the entrance with offices above survived for quite a few more years. Incidentally Crippen used to meet his mistress Ethel le Neve, not far away in her apartment in Goldington Buildings.

The scenes of the Bedford in *Tottie True* were almost certainly studio mock-ups. Theatre interiors in films of the thirties and forties were invariably and quite obviously, specially-built sets, in *Champagne Charlie*, *Hoots Mon* and *Happidrome* among others. Even the dramatic finale of Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* was filmed not at the Palladium but in the Gaumont British Studios, Shepherds Bush.

Ray Dolling

Re Ian Patterson's letter in Bulletin 50/3 (p27). At least one film has used the Bedford Camden Town as a location. A ballet sequence in *Secret People* (directed by Thorold Dickinson in 1951 and still available on DVD) was filmed there – Audrey Hepburn was one of the main dancers – although some of it didn't make the final cut. There's more information about the filming in Lindsay Anderson's book *Making a film: the story of 'Secret People'* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1952).

Terry Hanstock

I would just like to correct an error about the Empire Theatre Burnley. This was my favourite cinema and actually closed in July 1970. During the sixties it ran mainly the ABC release and other unusual programmes. Sometimes it ran a Sunday-only programme and then either a 3 or 6 day programme. The standard of projection and presentation were excellent. Continuous programmes were run from around 2pm Monday to Saturday with one show on Sundays at 6:30. At the time it was run by Star Cinemas and when the new Studios ① & ② were opened the business moved there. The Empire closed on a Sunday and the Studios opened the following day. This actually in-

creased the number of screens in Burnley with the single-screen Odeon being the only other town centre cinema remaining open. The Empire was then converted for use as a Bingo hall and then Bingo transferred from the Palace Theatre, which was demolished shortly afterwards. The Studio cinemas did not last long when in 1972 the larger Studio ② was split into two screens around the time that the Odeon finally closed. The cinema treasures website says this happened in 1982 but by then the Studios were coming to the end of their short life. They did reopen under new management but, having become very run down, did not last long. I did go to the Studio cinemas but found them lacking in atmosphere after the Empire.

Michael Harrison



Two items in the May/June Bulletin chimed for me. One was the mention of tip-up seats, not benches, in the 'gods' at the London Palladium. The other was about the derelict Burnley Empire. There are many photographs of the decaying interior of the Burnley Empire on websites such as [28dayslater.co.uk]. On the latter is a view of the boarded-off 'gods', apparently with bench seating; but closer inspection reveals that the hard-up patrons sat on a ledge extension to the step on which those behind had their feet. Widely-spaced cast iron brackets held a single-plank backrest; but there was no protection from the feet. I attach my crude attempt to illustrate the seating arrangement on the photograph and the advertisement for the cinema's opening on Monday 19 May 1930. The admission prices confirm that the gallery was in use when the cinema opened. Was even 4d cheap enough for those seating conditions and steep sightlines?

Hector Hill

With regards the Cinema at Upwell, mentioned in your editorial in the last Bulletin. I did some research on it back in 1992 after coming across it one day when I was a coach driver and paying a visit to the old mill a few doors from the cinema. Its proprietor was a Mr William Peek of 'Richmond House' St Ives, Huntingdonshire. As far I could find out it ran four shows weekly with admission prices at 6d to 1s/6d, seating some 170 patrons on a single floor. As near as I could find out it closed around 1930/31 with the coming of sound. Mr Peek also ran two other cinemas, the Cinema at Sutton in Cambridgeshire, which he closed in 1934 and the New Cinema at Warboys (Hunts) which he leased out to Mr C Symonds in 1935.

Maurice Brader

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Two more pages of letters  
in the full Bulletin



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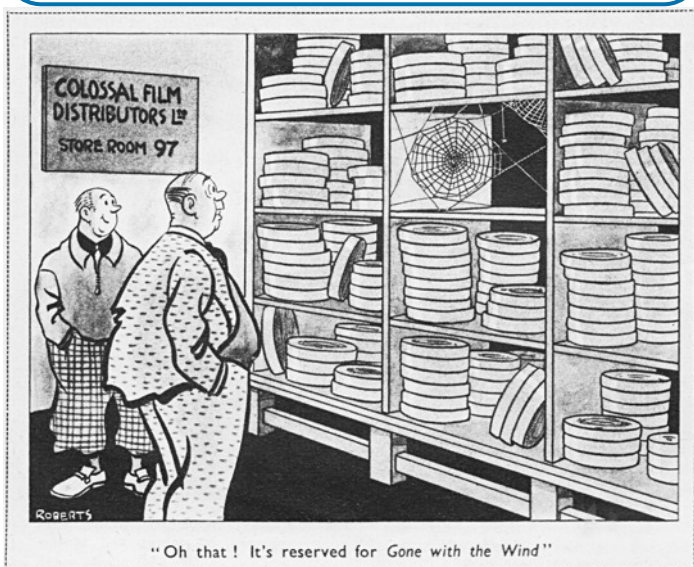


Majestic/Odeon 81 Raby Rd, Hartlepool. Opened 27 July 1936.  
Architects: Thomas Ridley Milburn / William Milburn. Grade II listed.



Regal 48 Bannatyne St, Lanark. Opened 31 August 1936.  
Architect: Lennox D Paterson. C(s) listed.

## CARTOON CORNER



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

## ARCHIVE

### ARCHIVE ENQUIRIES

The Archive is in temporary accommodation and this makes it hard to receive visitors and to deal with enquiries quickly. We cannot access all of the material as some remains boxed up. Please make enquiries in the normal way via the enquiry form on the website or by emailing [archive@cta-uk.com] and we will do our best to deal with these as soon as we can.

To arrange to visit the Archive, first complete the enquiry form detailing your interest and why you would like to visit. If the material you want to see is accessible we will then book you a visit and help you find your way to us in Bow, East London. You will need to have a mobile phone to contact us on arrival, to be let into the building or agree a set time of arrival to then be collected from the reception area.

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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 [archive@cta-uk.com].

### 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 [archive@cta-uk.com].

*Clive Polden, CTA Archivist*

## INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [www.asmera.nl/asmara-theaters.htm] Cinemas and theatres in Asmara, Eritrea. Also [www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-36540205] an article on the Impero cinema Asmara. *Sent in by Richard Jones*
- ★ [railwaymaniac.com/2016/05/cinemas] A page on a railway website but about Nottingham's cinemas. There are links at the bottom for other related pages. *Sent in by Terry Hanstock*
- ★ [www.jncohen.net/JaceyGroup/JaceyCinemasLtd.htm] The history of Jacey cinemas. It is run by the grandson of Joseph Cohen, who founded the Jacey Circuit. *Sent in by John Gibson*

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# HOLIDAY SNAPS

By John & Marion Kennett

Photos from a trip to Maine, USA in 2014

## MARTHA'S VINEYARD

1. Edgartown – Entertainment Cinemas, through shops
2. Strand Theatre, now bike store, pay desk
3. Oak Bluffs, Strand Theatre, now bike store
4. Oak Bluffs, Island Cinema possibly closed

## BOSTON

5. Schubert Theatre
6. Wilbur Theatre

## ROCKLAND

7. Strand Theatre

## BRUNSWICK

8. Through shops to Evening Star Cinema

