



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

Vol 50 No 1

January / February 2016



The Regent / Gaumont / Odeon Bournemouth, visited by the CTA last October – see report p8



An audience watching *Nosferatu* at the Abbeydale Sheffield – see Newsreel p28 – photo courtesy Scott Hukins

FROM YOUR EDITOR

You will have noticed that the Bulletin has reached volume 50. However, this doesn't mean that the CTA is 50 years old. We were founded in 1967 so our 50th birthday will be next year. Special events are planned to mark the occasion – watch this space!

A jigsaw we bought recently from a charity shop was entitled *Road Meets Rail*. It wasn't until I got it home that I realised it had the **Astoria/Odeon** Southend in the background. Davis Simpson tells me that the dome actually belonged to Luker's Brewery; the **Odeon** being built on part of the brewery site. There are two domes, marking the corners of the site and they are there to this day. The cinema entrance was flanked by shops and then the two towers. Those flanking shops are also still there: the **Odeon** was demolished about ten years ago and a University building constructed directly on the footprint of the cinema, although the entrance to the University was moved around the corner. The High Street cinema entrance is now occupied by Barclays. As to dating, the High Street was pedestrianised in the late 60s/early 70s, but the final steam trains on the Fenchurch Street line ran in 1963. So the picture is pre-1963, which is pretty obvious from the vehicles. Could it be mid/late 50s? (This, of course, assumes that 'artistic licence' hasn't led the artist to 'mix and match' periods to ensure an interesting picture!) {1841}



Some people describe our hobby as 'unusual'. Over the last few weeks, I have seen on TV or on the Internet some more examples of 'curious' interests. Did you know there are appreciation societies for post boxes, telegraph poles, manhole covers, water towers and roundabouts, to name just five? The latter two have issued calendars for 2016; in fact, a roundabout here in Harrogate features as 'Miss July' in one. I have come to the conclusion that if it exists, there is a Society for it and probably a magazine and a website too!

Thanks to Tim O'Sullivan for pointing out a discrepancy in the last Bulletin. The date of opening of the UK's oldest continuously-operating cinema, the **Duke of York's** in Brighton, was printed differently in two instances on p13. The entry under Brighton gives the correct date, 22 September 1910, whereas the date in Allen Eyles' addendum under Clevedon mistakenly gives 22 December 1910. I'm sorry this escaped my proof-reading. See *Picture House* No25.

Due to lack of space, the index to last year's Bulletins will appear in the next edition. Finally, I forgot to wish you all the compliments of the season in the last Bulletin, so here is a timely wish using a film frame sent in by Kevin Wheelan – Happy New Year!

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE SATURDAY 20 FEBRUARY

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(founded 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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Items for possible inclusion in the bulletin should be sent to

BULLETIN EDITOR: Harry Rigby [bulletin@cta-uk.org]
65 Tennyson Avenue, Harrogate, North Yorks, HG1 3LE

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: David Trevor-Jones † [david.trevorjones@btinternet.com]
47 The Street, Old Basing, Basingstoke, RG24 7BX

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Ian Meyrick † [ian@imeyrick.freemove.co.uk]
11 Tarrant Avenue, Witney, OX28 1EE

SECRETARY: Adam Unger † [atunger@blueyonder.co.uk]
59 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, TW11 0DJ

TREASURER: Neville C Taylor † (details as membership secretary above)

CASEWORK COMMITTEE – Chairman: Richard Gray †

45 Arnold Road, Bow, London, E3 4NU [richardjhgray@btinternet.com]

Members: as main committee plus Tim Hatcher,
Jane Jephcote, Mark Price, Vicky Simon, & Peter Wylde

ARCHIVIST: Clive Polden [cta-archive@hotmail.co.uk]
14 Ivychurch Gardens, Cliftonville, Margate, CT9 3YG

ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST: Rachel Marks
73 Cressy House, Hannibal Road, London, E1 3JF

PUBLIC RELATIONS: Gerald Glover [GeraldGloverCTA@aol.com]
228 Malpas Road, Brockley, London, SE4 1DH

PUBLICATIONS & SALES OFFICER: Jeremy Buck †
34 Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN [jbuck@connectfree.co.uk]

BOOK PUBLISHING MANAGER: Giles Woodforde †
69A Mill Street, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2EE [woodfordes@btinternet.com]

WEBMASTER: Rachel Woodforde
69A Mill Street, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2EE [web@cta-uk.org]

VISITS CO-ORDINATOR: Ray Ritmeester [ray.ritmeester@thetube.com]
66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB

PICTURE HOUSE EDITOR: Allen Eyles [allen@ayles.plus.com]
13 Tennyson Court, Paddockhall Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1EZ

CTA NORTH: David Eve, Gary Trinder [evecinema.t21@btinternet.com]
7 Shoreswood, Sharples, Bolton, BL1 7DD

CTA SCOTLAND: Gordon Barr, Gary Painter [info@ctascotland.org.uk]
87 Clerwood Crescent, Edinburgh, EH12 8PS

CTA CYMRU/WALES: John Skinner, Jon Williams [wales@cta-uk.org]
3 Swan Lane, Ystalyfera, Swansea, SA9 2JB

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Emma Beeson, Kevin Gooding, Lynda Hillman,
Tim McCullen, Sally McGrath, Ken Roe, David Simpson

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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]

VISITS & EVENTS

Empire, Leicester Square and Regent Street Cinema

Wednesday 24 February

Organised by Ken Roe and Richard Gray

Firstly, this will be an opportunity to see the new cinemas made out of the **Empire's** previously huge main auditorium, one specifically for an **IMAX** screen. It will be a morning visit, before the **Empire** opens to the public, while the afternoon's visit will be to the **Regent Street Cinema**, a revival of the Cameo-Poly cinema, which closed in 1980.

The **Empire** is one of the most important theatre and cinema sites in the West End, opening as the **Empire Theatre of Varieties** in 1887, although entertainments of various types had taken place on the site from the early part of the 19th Century. The Victorian theatre was largely redeveloped by the Hollywood studio Metro-Goldwyn Mayer in 1927-8 to be their London showcase; it was also the largest ever to have been built in the West End. It had a magnificent and ornate interior but this was lost in 1962 when a reduced cinema was created with a ballroom (now a casino) in the semi-basement. Since then screens were created in subordinate spaces and a connection made to the **Ritz** cinema next door, thereby creating something of a multiplex but until 2013-2014 George Coles' main auditorium remained intact. However, filling the 1,300 seats regularly became a problem and it was decided by the **Empire's** operators, Ward Anderson of Ireland, to subdivide it for an **IMAX** screen and an **IMPACT** auditorium with a Dolby Atmos sound system and a balcony.



The **IMPACT** auditorium at the **Empire** – photo by Ken Roe

The Lumière brothers made their pioneering 'Cinématographe' presentation at the **Regent Street Polytechnic** in February 1896 but what is now the **Regent Street Cinema** started full-time film-life there in 1912, with the auditorium being reconstructed in 1927. After closure in 1980 it became a lecture hall for the University of Westminster, as the Polytechnic had by then been rechristened. Recently the University decided to again use the space for films and instituted a remodelling whereby the balcony seating has been extended towards the stage and the cinema reopened during this summer. [See p7 Bulletin 49/4.] The CTA casework function had a substantial hand here in which we were determined that the 1927 interior should as far as possible be retained rather than carelessly swept away. The Compton organ has survived and is now playing, with the console repositioned on the stage.

Arrangements: Meet outside the **Empire** Leicester Square at 10:00 prompt, as we expect the duration of the visit to be 30-40 minutes, due to the opening hours of the cinema. We hope to see the **IMAX** Screen, the **IMPACT** auditorium (with its balcony) and possibly Screen 2 (the former **Ritz** Cinema). Afterwards is free time.

We meet again at the **Regent Street Cinema** 307 Regent Street (to the north of Oxford Circus) at 12:45. There will be a talk about the cinema's history, followed by a recital on the Compton organ. Both of these visits are free to members (with a minimal cost for visit notes).

Registration: Please register your attendance by contacting the Visits Registration line 020 8800 8393, leaving a message giving your Name, Membership Number & Contact number.

After the **Regent Street Cinema** visit, members may wish to attend their *Matinée Classics* programme, which screens a classic Hollywood film and features the Compton organ. This commences at 13:40 (film at 14:00) all for a very minimal cost.

CTA AGM

Saturday 7 May at 11:00

The 2016 AGM will be held at the **Odyssey** cinema in St Albans, Hertfordshire. The visit will start at 10:00 in order to see the recently refurbished building, which was originally opened as the **Capitol** in 1931, becoming the **Odeon** in 1945. The cinema closed in 1995 and following major investment reopened in 2014. An afternoon visit to the St Albans Organ Theatre is also planned.

Full details and information will be included in the next Bulletin.

Coming Soon

London Palladium Tour

We are planning to visit the world famous **London Palladium**. A provisional date has been given for Thursday 21 April, which is still to be confirmed by the **Palladium** management. This will be an exclusive tour for the CTA and full details will appear in the March/April Bulletin.

Adam Unger

Bologna in September

Bologna is a historic but lively major city in northern Italy. In the well-preserved City centre is the Piazza Maggiore, surrounded by cafés and restaurants, while the streets have lengthy colonnades built as shade in the summer and shelter in the winter. The most famous features of Bologna are the medieval towers built by competing and feuding medieval families, the best known of which is the Asinelli Tower, which is open to visitors. Additional sites are the Neptune Fountain and the Basilica of San Petronio. Bologna also has the oldest university in the world, founded in 1088 and the thousands of students enrich the cultural life of the City.

Bologna is also the location of important historic theatres and numerous cinemas. Chronologically, they are the **Anatomical**, built of spruce as part of the university in 1636 (although it had to be reconstructed after WWII bombing) with its statues of ancient physicians such as Hippocrates; the **Teatro Comunale** of 1763, having a large horseshoe-shaped auditorium designed by Antonio Galli Bibiena and the charming and intimate **Teatro di Villa Aldrovandi Mazzacorati** – a private 19th Century theatre outside the City centre. Five interesting cinemas have been identified.

Outside Bologna the tour will visit the **Teatro all-antica/Olimpico** of 1588 in Sabbionetta designed by Vincenzo Scamozzi (a disciple of Andrea Palladio) with a stepped seating area, a semi-circular colonnade and a perspective vista set; the larger **Teatro Farnese**, fitted on to the first floor of the Farnese Palace in Parma in the early 17th Century – one of the earliest to have moveable scenery and the beautiful Baroque **Teatro Bibiena** of 1769 designed by Antonio Galli Bibiena in Mantua and where a few weeks later the 13-year-old Mozart performed. We also intend to include the magnificent but little known – in Britain – spa town of Salsomaggiore Terme, which has lavish 19th Century buildings, including a theatre-concert venue. If time permits we may be able to visit other theatres in Mantua and a most unusual late 19th Century one in Ferrara.

As yet, we are only in the planning stage but we expect the tour to last for around five days in mid-September 2016, possibly commencing on Saturday 17 September. Accommodation will be at a good 3 or 4 star hotel located in central Bologna, convenient for restaurants and cafés. Accommodation will be on a bed and breakfast basis, although there may be a group dinner as is customary on CTA expeditions. Travel arrangements are also still being planned and may be as group departing from a London airport or on a 'get yourself to Bologna' basis. Travel to Mantua, Parma and other locations will be by

group coach. We will be accompanied by an English/Italian-speaking courier. At the moment it is impossible to provide a costing but we are calling for 'expressions of interest' for this tour and these should be directed to Richard Gray on: [richardjhgray@btinternet.com] or by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to: Richard Gray, 45 Arnold Road, London, E3 4NU.

Whatever happens, never ask for a 'Spaghetti Bolognese' ('spag bog') in Bologna as there it doesn't exist!

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.

Help Wanted

The CTA events committee would love to hear from members of any ideas for visits or events they may have. We can offer support and guidance for anyone who would like to organise a visit or event.

Please send your thoughts to the CTA events committee, c/o Ray Ritmeester, 66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB or drop me an email to [ray.ritmeester@thetube.com].

Other Events of Interest (not organised by the CTA)

Details of these events are given in good faith but the editor or the CTA cannot be responsible for any inaccuracies; please check before travelling.

THE PLAZA, STOCKPORT

Friday 29 January Zulu (1964) [PG]
Saturday 6 February Organ Coffee Morning (10am) Admission Free
Friday 12 February 45 Years (2015) [15]
Sunday 14 February Brief Encounter (1945) [PG]
Thursday 18 February Sing-a-long-a-Frozen (2:00pm)
 Sing-a-long-a-Grease (7:30pm)
Friday 25 March Whistle Down the Wind (1961) [PG]
Monday 28 March An exciting on-screen event to be announced; details scheduled for 11 January – see the website for information

Films at 11am & 7:30pm unless otherwise stated.

Behind the Scenes tours at 11am on Mondays 25 January, 22 February, 28 March & 25 April. £6 – book or simply turn up.

Box Office: 0161 477 7779; website [www.stockportplaza.co.uk]

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COS MUSIC & PICTURE EVENINGS [\[www.cinema-organs.org.uk\]](http://www.cinema-organs.org.uk)

Friday 12 February David Warner

Friday 11 March TBA

At 6:45pm. Admission £4. Further info 07855 546823; refreshments available from 6:15pm and at the interval.

Venue: The Gallery at Alan Baxter's, 75 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EL. On leaving Farringdon Underground walk east 150 yards towards 'Snappy Snaps' shop. Entrance to The Gallery is opposite; walk through the large gates, cross the courtyard to the far end, turn right down steps.

THE CINEMA MUSEUM, LONDON

See the website [www.cinemamuseum.org.uk] for full details of their programme of events. Tel: 020 7840 2200.

The Cinema Museum Bookstall will be open from 14:00 to 17:00 on Saturday 13 February and Monday 14 March. Admission Free. The Master's House, 2 Duggard Way, London, SE11 4TH

THE FECKENODEON (Worcestershire, B96 6HN)

This year's programme is now on-line. CTA members wishing to attend can book tickets (£5) at [www.feckencodeon.co.uk] or by phone through TicketSource on 0333 666 3366 (local call rate) – or you can contact the Society directly on [films@feckencodeon.co.uk].

30 January The Hundred Foot Journey (2014) [PG]

27 February I'm All Right Jack (1959) [U]

19 March The latest James Bond – Spectre (2015) [12A]

Shows on Saturdays at 7:30pm. Licensed bar at all performances.

BLACKPOOL WINTER GARDENS FILM FESTIVAL

Friday 22 - Sunday 24 January; Opera House Blackpool

Highlights of this festival are 'Play along George Formby' – bring your ukulele for *Keep Your Seats Please* (1936) and the silent *Man with a Movie Camera* (1928) with live Wurlitzer accompaniment.

Full details and booking at [www.wintergardensfilm.co.uk]

FESTIVAL OF FILM 2016

Sunday 24 January 9:30am-5:30pm

Watersmeet, High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1EH.

The CTA will have a bookstall at this event – poster below.

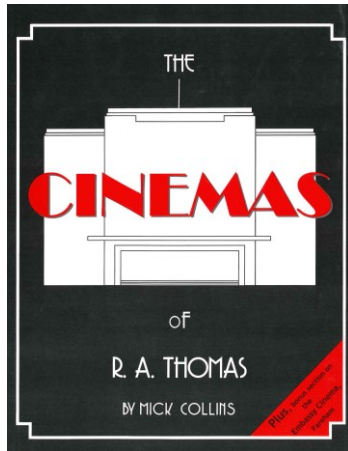
PUBLICATIONS

New Publications

The Cinemas of RA Thomas

by Mick Collins. 346 pages, large paperback, fully illustrated in b&w and colour, £24.99 plus postage.

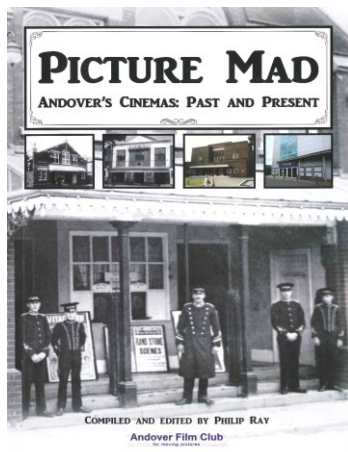
This handsome volume describes the cinema work of the architect Robin Audrey Thomas (1881-1956) of Cosham. Buildings included are the **Plazas** at Romsey and Dorchester; the **Savoy** at Fareham; the **Carlton** at Cosham; the **Regals** at Eastleigh and Parkstone; the **Empires** at Havant and Portsmouth; the **Ritz** Burnham on Sea; the **Apollo** Southsea and the **Palace** Alton. There is a bonus section about the **Embassy** Fareham, not a Thomas-designed building. There are over 450 illustrations of these cinemas, together with builder's plans, advertising and programmes. There are illustrations of Mr Thomas's non-cinema works. Of the cinemas described, happily Dorchester, Burnham-on-Sea and Alton are still showing films, whilst Romsey is a thriving amateur dramatic theatre, visited by the CTA – along with Alton – in Summer 2015. Well recommended.



Picture Mad – Andover's Cinemas Past & Present

by Philip Ray. A5 paperback, illustrated, £7.50 plus postage.

Andover Film Club have produced this well-researched book about the town's six cinemas – **Electric Picture Hall**, **New Theatre**, **Savoy**, **Rex**, **Palace/Odeon** and the 'new' **Odeon**, built as part of the Reel chain. There are plenty of illustrations, many from the local press, together with press advertisements and a short section about J Arthur Rank, who lived locally at Sutton Scotney. An interesting read; maybe other local film societies will be encouraged to produce histories of their area's cinemas too!



Recently Published (reviewed in previous editions)

From Pictures to Pints – Cinemas that Became Pubs

by Gavin McGrath. A4 paperback, 30 pages, fully illustrated. £4.00 plus postage.

The Magic Screen – a history of Regent Street Cinema

Various authors. Large format paperback, 178 pages, fully illustrated. £20.00 plus postage.

The Auditorium

A historical look at cinemas in and around old North Warwickshire by Peter Lea. A5 Paperback, 66 pages. £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 2014 are £4.00 per year (6 issues); individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2015 and 2016 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, 20, 22, 23 & 24, priced £5.00 each, plus postage.

| | | |
|--|-------|---|
| 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; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life. |
| 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; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; Cinema Murders. |
| No 39 | £6.00 | WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two Regals ; Odeon North Finchley; Majestic Oxford; Films at the Royal Albert Hall . |
| No 40 | £6.00 | Tolmer Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham – a Granada man. |

AND WHERE TO KEEP THOSE PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINES?

'Cortex' 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.

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.

Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

Variety at Night is Good For You

A journey around 92 London Variety Theatres. inspired by JO Blake, compiled and illustrated by Nicholas Charlesworth. 528 pages, 48 pages in colour, 20 page index.

Limited edition of 700 copies. £40.00 including postage.

Order from RNR Charlesworth, 39 Clay Close, Dilton Marsh, Westbury, BA13 4DU or from [www.vaudeville-postcards.com] This splendid record of Music Halls, Empires/Palaces of Variety and Theatres which have been used for variety (and often film), has been twenty years in the making and is undoubtedly the benchmark for readers (and researchers) interested in the good old days. John Earl's Foreword whets the appetite... "a book that will spend far more time in the hand than on the shelf. I find it hard to believe that it has never been attempted before." This is the most comprehensive book on this subject yet published – it contains:

- A Year at the **Metropolitan** – January to December 1952 (list of every act, every week)
- List of Halls - West End, North of the Thames, South of the Thames (472 pages)
- Index of Artists (16 pages)
- Index of Theatres (4 pages)
- Index of Architects (1 page)
- Index of Productions (5 pages)
- Index of Managements (5 pages)

Nicholas Charlesworth's Introduction includes a fascinating record of his own rite of passage from the **Bournemouth Pavilion** during the 1940s to the present day. He took dozens of photographs, often of the destruction of venues such as **Lewisham Hippodrome**, **Collins' Music Hall** Islington and the **Metropolitan Music Hall** Edgware Road. From his motley collection (a valuable resource in itself) he produced a series of line drawings which became the basis of this book. Originally, author JO Blake wrote a caption for each line drawing... "but as the captions were so interesting I asked him to expand them to paragraphs or even longer." This combination of words and drawings is irresistible – in fact, Charlesworth's drawings are more evocative than photographs. Dipping into *Variety at Night is Good for You* will certainly be good for you! ★★★★★ Thoroughly recommended.

Review by Gerald Glover; also recommended by Ian Patterson

FROM CELLULOID TO CEREAL: Cinemas That Became Supermarkets

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CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

Refusals for Listed Status

It is both disappointing and perturbing to report that three comprehensive listing applications submitted by the CTA to Historic England have been refused. In addition to the three cinemas concerned, which comprise the **Regal** at Bridlington, **Towers** at Hornchurch and **Carlton** in London's West End, the **Coronet** in London's Elephant and Castle district, proposed for listing by the Theatres Trust, has also been rejected. See Newsreel p24.

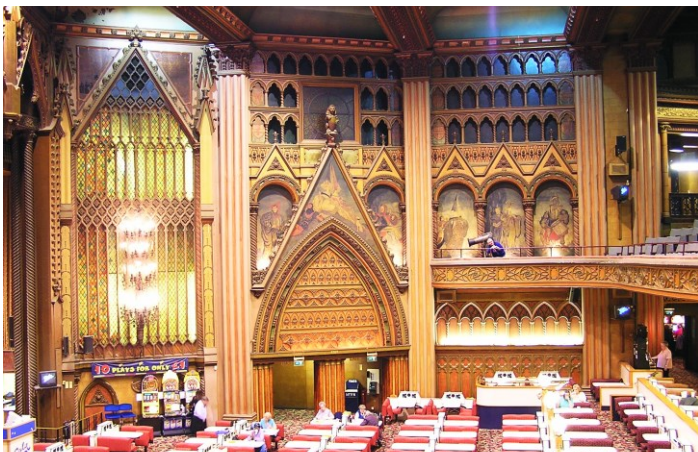


The interior of the **Regal/ABC** Bridlington

Both the **Regal** and the **Towers** survive with the majority of their impressive original features intact, as does the **Regal** in Sunderland, another recently rejected candidate for statutory protection. The subjective standard used to adjudge this building type appears both unclear and variable. Particularly concerning are factual errors in the written responses from Historic England's staff, which demonstrate either lack of attention to detail or of knowledge on the part of the assessor, neither of which is acceptable for such an office.

A meeting is due to be held with Historic England to discuss the issues involved.

Grade I Listed



The interior of the **Granada** Tooting in March 2004

On a more positive note, it is gratifying to report that the **Granada** in Tooting has been registered as an Asset of Community Value by Wandsworth Council; this is apparently the first arts-related building in the Borough to be so designated. Although it was a legal requirement for local residents to propose the application, the Association played a pivotal rôle in promoting and encouraging the scheme locally.

Grade II* Listed

The Cambridge office of Historic England has invited the CTA to become involved in the pre-application process relating to the proposed conversion of the **State** at Grays into a JD Wetherspoon's hostelry.



The **Himalaya Palace** Southall in April 2006

It is reported that the **Palace** at Southall has been sold and that the new owner wishes to make alterations to the structure. Ealing Council's conservation officer will be contacted to ascertain the nature and extent of the proposals.

A meeting has been held with a representative of **Everyman** Cinemas and Haringey Council's Conservation Officer concerning proposed alterations to the **Odeon** at Muswell Hill. Strong objection is being directed towards the concept of providing two additional screens by inserting so-called 'pods' at each side of the circle; these would destroy both the spatial integrity of the auditorium and the uninterrupted view of its superb ceiling, arguably its finest feature.

No objection is being made to plans to reverse the position of lavatorial and bar facilities in the **New Victoria** in London in order to accommodate increased provision of conveniences for female patrons.

Grade II Listed

It is reported that a pre-application relating to the **Ritz** at Grays had been received by the local Council from a church, although the cinema was subsequently sold to another party.

Listed Building Consent for alterations to the **Odeons** at Barnet and Esher, now **Everyman** venues, has been granted by their respective local authorities.

A second cinema, the **Angel Picture Theatre** in Islington, is under threat from the Crossrail 2 scheme. The auditorium was demolished in 1974 but the impressive tower feature and balcony entrance survive. (The **Curzon** in Shaftesbury Avenue is the other cinema endangered by the rail project, as previously detailed here.)



The **Angel** in April 2006

Unlisted

Lambeth Council is promoting a major redevelopment scheme in the environs of the **Palladium** in Brixton, currently utilised as a nightclub. Although retention of the building is intended, concerns arise over the likelihood of noise complaints from residents in the new development as, somewhat counter-intuitively, prior exigencies and consequences of operation of extant properties hold little legal sway over the rights of occupants of newly built neighbouring properties.

The **Rivoli** in Sandown is threatened with demolition, although the local Council has identified it as a building of merit; the Association is to write in endorsement of this view.

The Kingsway International Christian Centre has appealed against the decision to refuse permission to use the **Rialto** in Crystal Palace as a church. The CTA's original letter of objection will be passed to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the appeal process.

ASSORTED BOURNEMOUTH CINEMAS

A report of the CTA Visit, October 2015
by Mike Wood

With the approach of autumn, those of us that spend too much time (?) in the twilight zone of cinema and theatre interiors around the world, needed a vitamin D top-up and where better than Bournemouth on the Dorset coast. CTA North, with their excellent track record of great trips, know this area well and had organised a similar tour a few years back, which garnered rave reviews, so it was no surprise that this one should be over-subscribed.

Thus the lucky ones gathered on Wednesday lunchtime on the last day of September at our base hotel, which was situated on the West Cliff, above the wide sandy sweep of Bournemouth beach, with views to the East, Hengistbury Head with the Isle of Wight's Needles in sight and looking west towards Sandbanks and Old Harry Rocks. David Eve handed out the fifty-page book of visit notes along with a short briefing and then we departed for a walking tour of the town.

Some discussion took place about the precise location of the **Electric** (1910, rebuilt 1921 Frank Matcham, altered 1930 Cecil Massey) which was in the busy shopping street of Commercial Road; the cinema was demolished in 1966 for retail premises. It became clear that this side of the town was changing rapidly with several high-rise buildings recently completed and another big development underway in Exeter Road, where the latest multiplex plan was thought to have landed.



The interior of the **Theatre Royal Bournemouth**

We crossed the square to Albert Road for the handsome exterior of the **Theatre Royal / Curzon / Tatler** (1882 Kemp, Welsh & Pindar, listed grade II*). Several changes over the years have resulted in a casino downstairs, with its entrance at the stage end on Yelverton Road and a church in the original upper circle space, which had become the **Curzon/Tatler**, closing in 1982. The father of the church, which serves a mainly Portuguese congregation, kindly welcomed us with a few words about how they use this space for their ministry.

It was decided to forgo the membership registration required by the casino operator in the lower part of the Theatre Royal and instead, passing the shell of the **Bijou Cinema Deluxe / Premier** (1936 E De Wilde Holding) latterly a shop, we headed for Hinton Road and the **Palace Court Theatre / Playhouse / Galaxy** (1931 Seal & Hardy). For many years this was the Bournemouth home of drama and repertory theatre for which it was built. Latterly it converted to film, at first as the **Galaxy** in the Green Room basement space, then also in the theatre. Sold on to the



The **Theatre Royal** façade



The exterior and interior of the **Playhouse/Galaxy Bournemouth**

Wessex Christian Centre, who had been holding church services in the building on Sundays, its simple architectural features and theatrical elements remain and are enjoyed by the church as explained by our friendly host, the pastor.

That evening, back at the hotel and after dinner, we were treated to a couple of 16mm shorts

about Bournemouth's cinema heyday shown to a packed room by John Thornley and Phillip Stevens, local CTA members. Thursday dawned sunny and warm again so, after a jog along the beach (!) and a big breakfast, it was a walk back into the town centre and Westover Road, where the two most significant venues lie; their stature, historical significance and that they are still on movies, though not for much longer. At one time there were four in a row; the **Westover** originally the **Westover Palace** (Roller) Skating Rink and Tea Gardens of 1910, which was full-time cinema by 1919, along with dainty teas and dancing; the Brass House pub is located in part of the original structure.



The **Playhouse/Galaxy** in 1985

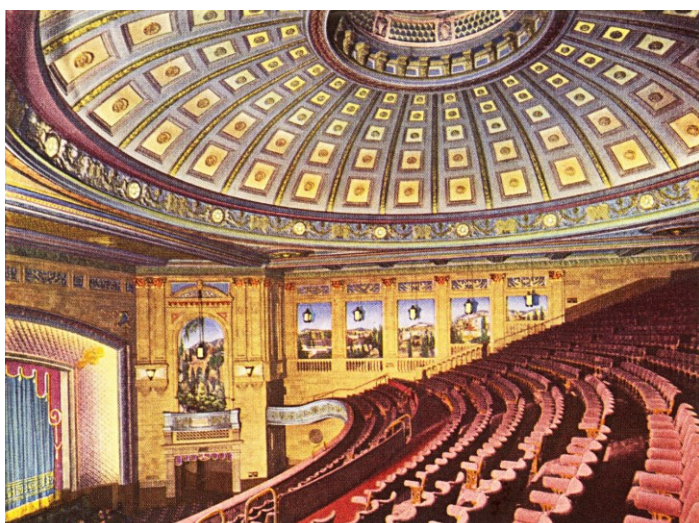




The façade and screen ① at the **ABC Bournemouth**

The **Westover** closed in 1937 and the next day the **Westover Super Cinema / Cannon / MGM / ABC** (WR Glen) opened with seating for approximately 2,500 in stalls and circle. At first it was operated by **ABC** who had taken over the earlier cinema next door. After it was tripled by **ABC**, other exhibitors moved in and finally it was taken over by **Odeon**, who restored the **ABC** branding, either as a nicely uncorporate gesture but more likely to differentiate it from the **Odeon** two doors away.

In 1930 the **Westover Ice Rink** had opened with the later addition of a proscenium stage and film projection room for the presentation of revues. This large hall had a few deco touches to the interior and the long five-bay façade makes a big statement in the streetscape. The building, not visited on this trip, now houses a gym.



The original interior of the **Regent Bournemouth**

Standing just apart from the ice rink is the striking arcaded Italian Renaissance style frontage of the **Regent / Gaumont / Odeon** (1929 WE Trent) [see photo front cover]. This impressive building was a Provincial Cinematograph Theatres (PCT) project and must have spared no expense with its use of marble and onyx interior finishes and painted scenes to the fire curtain and auditorium side walls, all under a large coffered dome atop the stalls and balcony that could hold an audience of 2,300.



Screen ① at the **Odeon Bournemouth**

The building is locally listed for its exterior. Nothing is thought to remain of the original interior following an ambitious remodelling for Cinerama in 1968, when the dome was dismantled and the roof lifted to accommodate a new Screen ① that would seat 757. The downstairs screen has since been split into four with another in the original restaurant space, bringing the total to six. The space for Cinerama is the last surviving intact in the UK and its deeply-curved screen is said to be the largest, excepting perhaps an **IMAX** here or there.

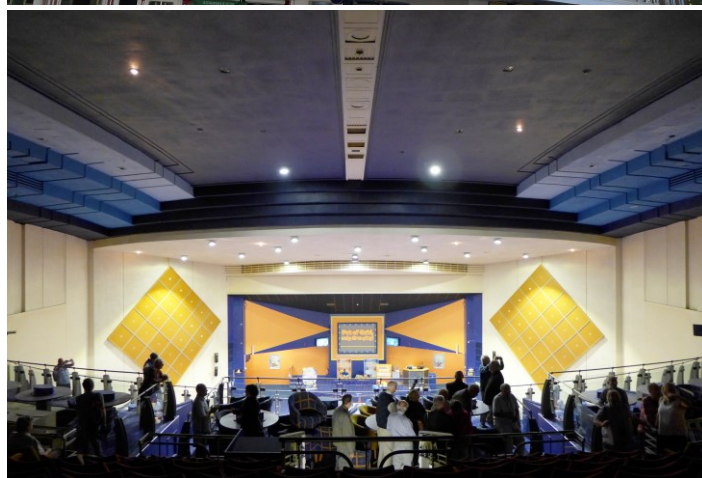
What happened to the Bournemouth **IMAX**? CTA members will know that this has gone, being maybe a good idea but very definitely in the wrong place. All that is left is the big concrete retaining wall holding back the hill, just begging for graffiti in 1.43:1. But watch out Bournemouth for **ISENSE** at the new ten screen **Odeon**, due to open in Exeter Road in 2017 and they had better get it right. The developer's impression of the new build fails to impress, with its incohesive exterior angles. Bournemouth's recent planning has been lamentable, the out of scale **IMAX**, loss of the **Winter Gardens** for a car park, the uninspiring **BIC** conference centre, at least four despairing attempts at getting a multiplex built, including a stupid proposal to build on the get-in yard of the Pavilion. It was good to see the **Odeon** and **ABC** before the cinema era comes to an end and now that the sale for redevelopment of these two cinemas in Westover Road has been announced, what next? See Newsreel p21.



The exterior and interior of the **Pavilion Bournemouth**

After a break, we reassembled for a lunchtime organ concert at the **Pavilion**. This was originally built in 1929 as a concert hall, with stage and fly tower added for theatre in 1934 and it is now listed grade II. This presents a handsome exterior in brick and stone, topped by a shallow pyramid-shaped roof above the theatre and blocks to the side and rear set into the hillside by the Pleasure Gar-

dens, which house a large ballroom and other spaces. The theatre can accommodate about 1,500 in stalls and a shallow balcony on three sides, surrounded by a promenade. The interior is relatively unfussy, with the curved ante-proscenium disguising the Compton's pipe lofts, all beneath a square domed ceiling. The concert drew a good audience and we then had a comprehensive tour led by Christian Knighton, Technical Coordinator and CTA member.



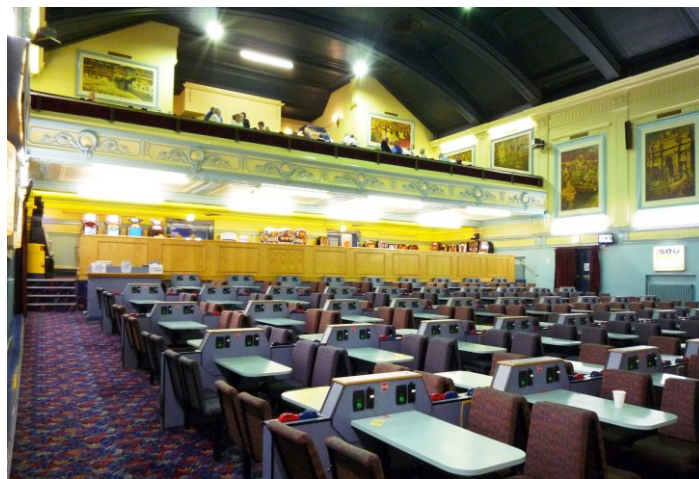
The façade and interior of the **old Odeon Bournemouth**

A stroll up the Bath Road to the Lansdowne area of Bournemouth took us to the 'other' **Odeon** / Gala Bingo (1937 George Coles). Seating 2,300 in stalls and circle in a very plain auditorium, where most of the interest is in the stepped ceiling treatment. It was built as part of a long brick and terracotta shops and flats development; the cinema is marked by an illuminated vertical fin. On bingo since 1974, this was the first **Odeon** built there, despite considerable opposition from the then local authorities; how times have changed. See back page Bulletin 48/1.

Following our evening meal back at the hotel, we headed to the affluent suburb of Westbourne for the Bournemouth **Colosseum** (sic) which is claimed to be the UK's smallest cinema, seating just nineteen. It is in the basement below the Lavish Life café in Westbourne Arcade and our genial host dispensed welcome drinks whilst we took it in turns to see their promotional short. A quick look at their schedule shows something on every evening except Christmas and Boxing Days, with private hires slotted in between. A café with a cinema attached instead of a cinema with a café, seems like a great idea.



The frontage of the **Grand Westbourne, Bournemouth**



The interior of the **Grand Westbourne, Bournemouth**

A few steps up the street is the **Grand Cinema Theatre** (1922 unknown, listed grade II). The, of the period, neo-classical white faience frontage is intact, including a full-width pavement canopy, only missing the revolving globe above the broad pediment. Inside is an auditorium for 1,000 in stalls and a small balcony beneath an interesting barrel-vaulted ceiling. Plaster swags and wreaths decorate the balcony front and painted scenes fill panels between side wall pilasters. The decorative plaster proscenium and bingo caller's paraphernalia mask a small stage. This friendly, independent bingo operation is keeping the place warm and dry, at least for now.



The interior of the **Regent Lyme Regis**

Saturday was an early breakfast to board the eight-o'clock coach laid on for our trip across Dorset to Lyme Regis and the **Regent** (1937 W H Watkins, listed grade II). Scott Cinemas have kept this perfect little (originally 560 seats in stadium style – now 305 re-seated) small-town cinema going, summer and winter, for a while now and were in the throes of upgrading the front of house facilities at the time of our visit. Nevertheless, we were able to also view the tiny roof-top projection box, now equipped with digital and satellite downloads of course, alongside the 35mm projector. The auditorium originally featured Holophane lighting that reflected off the horizontal and vertical fluting and festoon tabs.



The exterior and interior of the **Marine Theatre** Lyme Regis

At the bottom of Broad Street is the **Marine Theatre**, set within its own courtyard, tucked into the cliff overlooking the small Church Beach. Its footings are thought to date from 1740. It was a bath house in 1805 and a cinema in the 1920s, which must have seen the existing art deco façade added latterly. It became a theatre sometime in the 1930s, when the operator's thoughts turned to building the **Regent** up the street. Inside it is a comfortably ramshackle but pleasing flat-floored hall, with a rounded proscenium probably dating from the cinema period and a slightly raked stage. The welcome couldn't be bettered, with tea, coffee and an everlasting supply of biscuits.



The exterior and interior of the **Electric Palace** Bridport

It was lucky that we had refreshments before we re-boarded the coach, as the short journey to Bridport met with unexpectedly slow traffic, throwing the schedule, so that when we arrived at the **Electric Palace** / **Palace** (1926 Frederick Cooper, listed grade II) for a leisurely viewing, David was busy renegotiating the rest of the day's programme. The original **Electric Palace** of 1912 had been located in Barrack Street and has had a chequered history but is now back in use as the **Lyric** puppet theatre. The present cinema was promoted by the local brewer JC Palmer and was built with stage and dressing rooms and the hall to seat 407 in stalls and balcony. Paintings attributed to pub sign painter George Biles still exist in the upper foyer area and those missing from the auditorium have been recreated in modern style. It too has had recent troubles with unfounded rumours of structural problems and difficulties getting an audience for the film offering and upmarket brasserie. It is now reawakening with a new technical rig for the stage in progress at the time of our visit.



Screen ① at the **Plaza** Dorchester

David's reworked schedule made time for an unexpected stop at the Dorchester **Plaza** (1933) where Adam Cunard's expanding Picturedrome Electric Theatre Company was putting the finishing touches to a major upgrade and the addition of a fourth screen. The whole building is back in use now with original features like the ceiling lighting fixtures restored and working in Screen ① (177 seats in original circle space). New carpets and wall treatments give the individual screens a quality look that belies the value admission price policy. See p14 last Bulletin and p13 Bulletin 49/5.

No time to linger in Dorchester as we were due in Wareham for the **Empire** / **Rex**, a 1920 conversion of the 1889 Oddfellows Hall. The upstairs screen, which now seats about 150, clearly shows its antecedents and this gives it great character. It is now run by a band of volunteers and some were there to meet us. We were treated to a promotional short animation feature of real comic invention, probably by Dougal Dixon who does the neat programme intros – link below.



The exterior and interior of the **Rex** Wareham



The exterior [2009] and interior of the **Tivoli Wimborne**

After an early dinner back at the hotel, we re-boarded the coach for Wimborne and *The Chicago Blues Brothers* live show at the **Tivoli** (1936 E De Wilde Holding, listed grade II). The cinema was built behind an existing building dating from Georgian times and ran under various owners until compulsorily purchased for a road widening scheme in 1981. This never happened and a local group persuaded Dorset County Council to donate it to the town. It had returned to film and theatre use by 1994. It was great to see an enthusiastic full house in stalls and balcony in the 500-seat fully restored theatre.



The **Moderne Winton, Bournemouth**

Saturday was to be our final morning with a coach trip towards the North and East of the wider Bournemouth area. We had photo stops at the **Coronation Picture House / Roxy** (1911) reasonably intact and now a photographic studio, the **Moderne** (1935 E De Wilde Holding) altered internally by its current church owners and the **Victoria / Ritz** (1928) auditorium demolished and the entrance now an antiques shop. In Boscombe is the **Shelley Theatre** (1866, listed grade II), which was a private project by the son of the romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley with Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*). Sir Percy Florence Shelley enjoyed theatricals and he built another private theatre in Chelsea, now lost. A developer has begun a restoration of the theatre at Boscombe Manor following redevelopment of the main building. Some events have already taken place whilst the work progresses and we were shown around by the programme director.



The interior of the **Shelley Theatre Boscombe**



The **Carlton/ABC** [2006] Boscombe

A break for lunch in Boscombe provided an opportunity to see the exterior of the **Grand Pavilion / Hippodrome / Opera House** (1895 Lawson & Donkin, listed grade II) now in use as the **O2 Academy** music venue but recently restored to the 1910 scheme when additions to the proscenium end were carried out, along with the name change to the **Hippodrome**. Some went to view the **Carlton / ABC** (1931 Reynolds & Tomlin) frontage only now with the *Sir Percy Florence Shelley* Wetherspoon in part and the auditorium recently demolished. We also made a quick stop en-route to Christchurch for a photo of the **Astoria Boscombe** (1932) with just a fragment of the front entrance left of what was a 1,500 seat cinema. The small vertical between the two sets of windows was the **Astoria** sign.



The former **Astoria Boscombe**

Our final visit took us to Christchurch and the **Regent** (1931), which replaced the **Royal / New Gaiety / Pavilion** of 1915, now a branch of the Royal British Legion. The **Regent** holds 700 in stalls and balcony and is looking immaculate. It had closed on film when **ABC** operated it in 1973 for a period on bingo with Mecca until the Borough Council bought it for conversion into a multi-purpose arts centre, apparently now doing very well on a mix of stage and film presentations; always good to finish on a high.



The exterior [2006] and interior of the **Regent** Christchurch

From here it was trains, cars and planes home for us, with our thanks to David and Gary of CTA North for a great trip, blessed with good weather, a welcoming hotel, a smart new coach and a really good selection of venues, all with friendly hosts. We wish the manager and staff of the **Odeon / ABC** a successful move to their new venture. Our thanks go to them and to Irene Draper, who brought along her father's fascinating photos of the **Gaumont**, Christian at the **Pavilion** and all of our hosts.

Photos: Mike Wood, Kevin Gooding & Harry Rigby

Links for more photos and description:

- **Tivoli** Wimborne Streetview virtual tour [tinyurl.com/pvndysg]
- British Pathé: *Bournemouth 1930-1940* [10 mins, silent] YouTube [www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuM6TgwJZzU]
- **Pavilion** Compton organ [www.cinema-organs.org.uk/uk%20Organ%20venues/bournemouthpavil.html]
- Westbourne **Grand** listing description and more photos [www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-485557-grand-cinema]
- Amusing Rex programme intros [www.therex.co.uk/article.php?sec=rexintros]



Re**x**traordinarily good ice cream

THE PALACE WARRINGTON

By David A Ellis

Warrington town centre is soon to have a cinema again. It is refreshing to see a new cinema in a town centre, a rare happening these days. My first job in the world of cinema was at the **Palace** back in 1964. I started in May as an assistant projectionist and the first film that was showing was *The Crimson Pirate* (1952). The **Palace** showed films that were several years old, usually a Sunday for one day only followed by Monday to Wednesday and Thursday to Saturday.



Designed by George F Ward, the **Palace** began life as a theatre called the **Palace Hippodrome**, opening on 23 September 1907. It was run by the MacNaughton Vaudeville circuit and opened with John Tiller's High Jinks Company. Films became part of the show in the early years. Two balconies were installed with a box on each side of the proscenium with baroque style plasterwork. The upper balcony or gallery was reached from an outside door at the side of the building. This was also the only way to get to the projection room.

In early 1931 it was converted into the **Palace** cinema, opening with Ben Lyon in *Hell's Angels*. It closed in 1957 when the owners came out of the business. The building remained closed for three years and was then taken over by the Hutchinson circuit and opened with the musical *Oklahoma*. The cinema went on for another four years, closing on 7 November 1964. When I was there the chief projectionist was a Mr Joe Slevin, who would fix TV sets between reels. The projection room was small and was equipped with RCA sound.

As a young assistant one of my jobs, twice a day was to go down the long flight of steps and get a jug of tea. The box also housed a small stove for warming pies. There was a relief projectionist by the name of Arnold Bates, who by day was a postman. Another of my tasks was to clean the glass in the projection ports with Windolene. When I was there I was only allowed to rewind and put the footlights and house-lights up and down. The dimmers were on sliders and sometimes I received an electric shock.

We had a bucket of sand, a bucket of water and an asbestos blanket in the box. All these had to be there in case of fire. When you look back, a projection room back then could be a hazardous place to be. There were fumes from the carbon arcs; these had to be cleaned every morning and there was a fair amount of dust. There was an asbestos blanket, which you wouldn't go near today and cleaning fluid called Thawpitt, which wasn't really good to handle or breathe in; I believe it is no longer used. There was the constant risk of having badly cut fingers from re-winding bad prints, which were sometimes very oily. The secondary lighting at the cinema was gas and the door-man would go around just before we opened and light them. Often in a morning the chief and I would go to a nearby coffee house and a cup of coffee back then was 6d or two and a half pence.

The last films at the **Palace** were *The Camp on Blood Island*, which was in black and white CinemaScope and *The Revenge of Frankenstein*, two Hammer offerings. The building became a Surewin bingo club and was opened by Peter Adamson, who was a Coronation Street star [Len Fairclough].

Photo below taken early 1960s by John Forster



STANFORD HALL THEATRE

By Andrew McGowan

Stanford Hall Theatre is a private theatre constructed by millionaire furniture retailer Sir Julien Cahn in 1938 on his Estate four miles north of Loughborough, Leicestershire. He was a keen amateur magician and President of the Leicester Magic Circle.



The exterior of the **Stanford Hall Theatre**

A description of the theatre is found in the late Mervyn Gould's excellent 1994 book published by Mercia Cinema Society *Loughborough's Stage and Screen*. The auditorium has 352 seats, a proscenium width of 24 feet and a stage depth of 30 feet, over which is a fly tower with full counterweight flying bars. Despite being a private theatre it was fully equipped to modern-day standards of the time and had a Wurlitzer Organ on an orchestra pit lift, a phantom piano and perforated roll auto player (the latter now understood to reside in the mechanical Music Museum at Brentford). The lighting control was 'state of the art' and featured a Blackburn and Starling remote control lighting board – the first such installation in the country!

Following the death of Sir Julien in 1944, the Hall and Estate of 300 acres were sold to the Co-operative Union for use as a training centre and in the early fifties the theatre was made available for amateur and professional use – the Midland Theatre Company played there following the closure of Loughborough **Theatre Royal** and later the Lincoln Theatre Royal Rep Company played on a three-week repertory tour.

With a thriving amateur theatre scene, the theatre was extremely well used and it was a great shock when nearly 60 years later the Cooperative Union decided to move their training facilities back to Manchester. The Estate was sold to local developer, The Raynsway Group, in 2001 and after a few months of being dark the theatre reopened for amateur use. Sadly, Mr Charles Rayns died in 2004 and theatre was closed down for the last time and now remains unused.

In October 2011 it was reported that the Duke of Westminster had purchased the Estate with a view to converting it into a rehabilitation centre for disabled service personnel and in August 2015 work started on a three year £300m project to form The Defence and National Rehabilitation Centre.

Unfortunately the proposals for the scheme do not include re-opening of the theatre for public use and, although the auditorium is to be refurbished, it is not intended to update the stage facilities and they will remain unused behind the fire curtain. In addition, the current front of house facilities – foyer, bar and Ladies and Gents toilets are to be demolished.

Readers may therefore be interested to see a photographic record of the theatre as it was on 1 October 2007, three years after it closed down. As will be seen, although limited updating of the facilities was carried out by the Co-op as finances allowed (notably the installation of a Strand 60-way AMC lighting board), most of the theatre remains very much as it was when built and forms a veritable time capsule of a pre-war theatre.

When originally constructed, the No1 lighting bar had six 1kW Focus lanterns but these were gradually replaced by eight second-hand



A Focus lantern

1kW P223s – wired as four circuits paired end to end in accordance with the four colour layout of the lighting board. Apart from this spot bar, the remaining stage lights were three four-colour battens (red, blue green and amber), a four-colour footlight and a double batten to light the Cyclorama.

In addition there was originally a Cyclorama flood bar with six Strand 1kW floods and two Strand acting area vertical floods – all subsequently replaced with eight CCT 1kW floods – again paired end to end on four circuits. A motley collection of old second-hand Strand lanterns were hung on precarious Dexion frames on the perches each side of the proscenium (originally there was just one 1950s Furse Fresnel each side) and additional side lighting was provided by Furse towers, each with three circuits of three 300W floods. To cope with the rake of the stage, each tower had jacked up wheels on one side so it was imperative to always ensure that they were in the correct SL or SR wing – otherwise they fell over!



Lighting towers



The spot bar and fire curtain

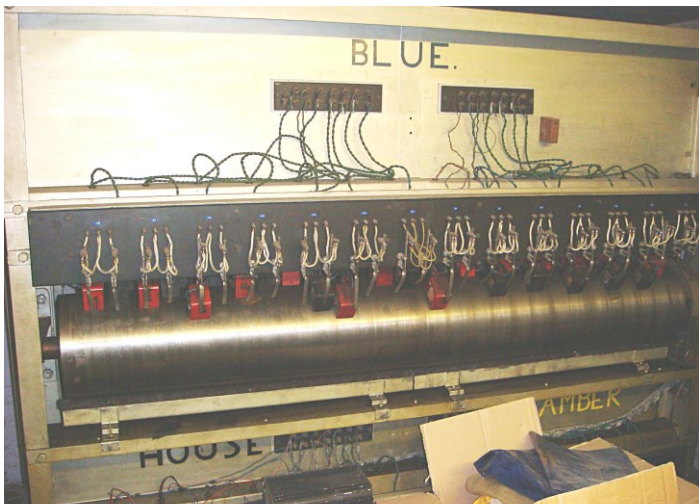


The switchboard

The lighting switchboard was a 'one off' by Blackburn and Starling of Nottingham (still in existence) and controlled 54 circuits each having two switches - the top one was a simple on/off and the bottom switch was three-position - 'Up' powered the magnet that pulled the sweep arm of the dimmer to Full; 'down' powered the other magnet to DIM

and the mid-point switched the magnets off so that the dimmer stayed in an interim position. The dimmers were arranged in four banks corresponding to the four different colours of the battens and there were Master and Grand Master controls to each bank.

As opposed to the later Strand system under Fred Bentham, where each pair of magnets clamped on to a separate rotating disc, the Blackburn and Starling system had a long polished steel drum driven by a variable speed motor for each colour with each pair of magnets resting on top and controlled by mercury tilt switches. Sometimes a trailing wire to a magnet would become detached - and not discovered until an 'all fade to black-out' left part of the stage still illuminated - warranting a rush to the under-stage dimmer room to repair the offending wire!

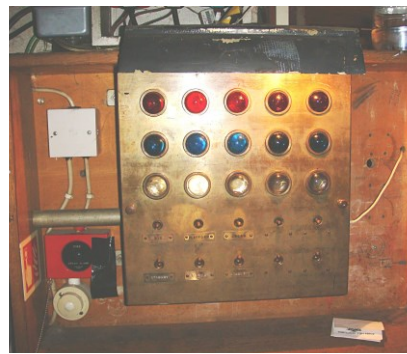


Dimmer drum and magnets

Originally, apart from the footlights, the only front-of-house lighting was six Focus lanterns (described on the switchboard as 'floods') situated above the fibrous plaster ceiling and approached via a vertical steel ladder and along scaffold boards across the ceiling joists.



The safety curtain lowered in the proscenium



The cue light panel and safety curtain control

No handrails or safety harnesses in those days! The light output from these lanterns was very poor and sometimes it was difficult to tell if they were even on - especially with an old spherical GES bulb that tended to go black with age and not helped by cigarette smoke from the patrons! Eventually these lights were replaced by 1kW profiles but it didn't help that management tried to replace the bulbs with 650W to save electricity. In later years the FOH lighting was supplemented by a pair of Pattern 23s on brackets on each side wall.

Backstage, stage management control was from the original polished brass red and green cue light system, which eventually was rarely used (apart from cueing the Wurlitzer Organ) and was replaced by a homemade mic and headset intercom. Radio walkie-talkies had been tried until on one occasion lighting cues were interrupted by a lullaby from a nearby father, picked up from a baby monitor! With a full-height fly tower, the majority of bars being counterweighted, a large white canvas Cyclorama hanging from a rigid spring tightened mounting at the rear and a depth of 27 feet, the stage was more than adequate for anything but the most demanding of shows and it is a great shame that this part of the theatre is not to be refurbished.

At the rear of the theatre is a full projection suite with projectionist's loo, mercury arc rectifier room, projection room with steel fire shutters to the ports and a separate rewind room. According to Mervyn Gould's book, the two arc projectors were restored by local members of the Projected Pictures Trust in 1992/3. However, after the theatre was sold to developers the projectors were moved to "decorate" the foyer of the developer's head office located elsewhere on the estate. That building has now been demolished pending the re-development of the site and sadly the whereabouts of the projectors is unknown to the writer. Perhaps a member of the CTA may have further information?

In addition to the projectors there was also an arc follow spot/slide projector and a double arc Brenograph Effects Projector, understood to have been imported from America. This latter machine had two arc housings, one above the other and via a system of moving mirrors could combine the two beams into one, which was then manipulated with various lenses, coloured irises and gobos to form what were understood to be remarkable lighting effects. Found in the rewind room was a steel gobo of a rabbit last use in a production of *Harvey* in the 1950s!

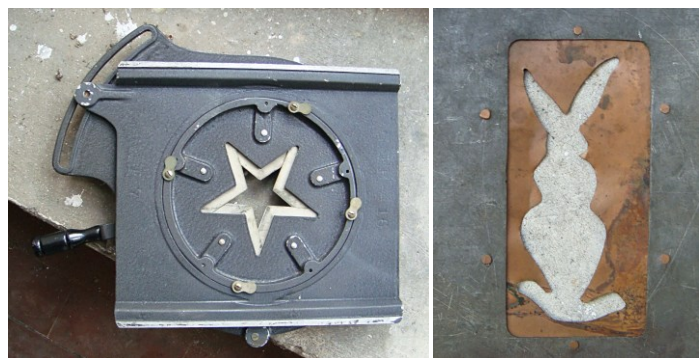
A 'high-tech' record player for audience music and The National Anthem completes the inventory for the projection suite, although originally music was from a 'panatrophe' located stage left - the legend "Pan" still being located on the loudspeaker routing switches.



The fly gallery showing counterweights and cyclorama

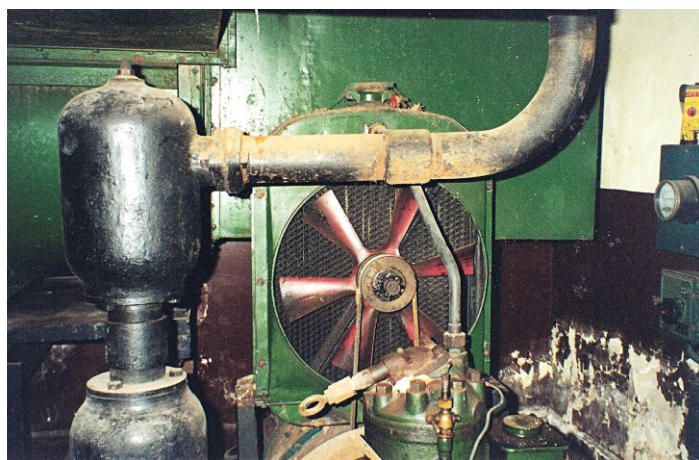


The film projectors, follow spot, Brenograph and record player



An adjustable 'star' gobo and the 'rabbit' gobo

Underneath the auditorium is an air-raid shelter constructed at the same time as the theatre, with two internal staircases – from the Gents Cloakroom and the Hall basement and an external staircase approached from the terrace at the rear of the theatre. Each entrance has submarine-type fully sealed and gas-proof steel doors and there is a forced-air system drawing air from the roof of the building with 1930s air conditioning equipment by Keith Blackman of London still in situ.



The air conditioning system

Each of the rooms in the shelter is beehive in shape to maximise strength and with over six feet of concrete between the shelter and the auditorium floor they would have been virtually impregnable to all but a direct hit. With its own water, sanitation, air supply and heating, it is understood that when the Co-op took over in 1945 the shelter was still fully furnished and stocked with food!

Finally it should be reported that this unique building also had twelve bedrooms located above the auditorium. Sir Julien had two passions – conjuring and Cricket – and the bedrooms were both for the use of visiting cricket teams and for guests to the Hall coming to be entertained in the theatre. It is understood that as part of the development, these rooms will be removed.

All photos by the author

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

UNION ENTERTAINMENT

*Here is an article from an old **Union Cinemas** programme. Reading this gives a good indication as to why the circuit went broke!*

To provide its patrons with all that is best, brightest and most original in modern entertainment – that is the policy of the Union Cinema Company, expressed in its simplest form. But to achieve such a policy is far from simple and to cope with the multifarious details which arise in the management of our 200 cinemas scattered throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain occupies the time and energy of some of the keenest brains in the world of entertainment, housed in a huge office in the West End of London. Long after most business houses have been deserted, the lights of Union House shine over Regent Street as a symbol of the company's efforts to achieve its policy.

Let's visit Harold Ramsay's office first. Mr Ramsay is Controller of Entertainment and in his office are planned the novel musical presentations which are such a popular feature of Union Programmes. Harold Ramsay has gathered round him a band of the greatest organ personalities of the day, whose broadcasting and recording activities have made their names household words: Sidney Torch, Cecil Chadwick, Robinson Cleaver, Joseph Seal, Alex Taylor, Andree Conti and Phil Park, to name but a few of them, all pool their talents in your service and the new shows they are planning will be a revelation. They are busy now on many novel productions, including 'cinematic' versions of the great operas, commencing with *Madame Butterfly* and *I Pagliacci*, in which screen, organ, orchestra and great vocalists will combine to present 'potted' grand opera in a form that will be absolutely universal in its appeal and at the same time entirely faithful to the composer's vision.

Next we visit Mr Montague Lyon, who is the brain behind the splendid variety presentations which, to judge by innumerable letters of appreciation, are the most popular feature of Union entertainment. Perhaps the most striking feature, of the office is the huge battery of telephones over which in a few staccato sentences Gracie Fields, appearing in Hull, agrees to visit the **Ritz** Belfast and Billy Cotton, in Penzance, contracts to perform at the **Ritz** Oxford.

Union spend £300,000 a year in artistes' salaries for ciné-variety shows and still the demand grows! In order to meet it we have been forced to organise a nation-wide talent hunt under the supervision of Tony Gerrard, 'The Star Finder,' who will visit every town on the circuit with a novel competition in which it is hoped to unearth talent of a high enough order to be given a contract to appear throughout the entire chain of Union Theatres. In addition valuable prizes will be awarded to the winners in every town.



The former **Union Dunstable** in April 2004 [22393]

From the Variety department we come to the biggest department of all – Film Bookings. Here negotiations have just been completed with all the biggest film studios, both British and American, to ensure that the pick of their productions shall be shown on Union's screens, in many cases long before they are generally released and often even before they have been shown in London itself. Films are and always will be the most important part in Union's scheme of better entertainment and no effort is being spared to ensure that we shall continue to offer you the cream of the world's pictures.

The only other department we shall have time to visit is Theatre Construction. When you realise that here are handled the problems arising from the simultaneous erection of the 75 super theatres that Union are building as part of their extension policy, some idea of the complexity of this office may be gathered. Every new theatre brings with it a train of fresh problems, for so quickly does cinema architecture advance that each one embodies some novel features in order that it may be the very last word in modern theatres. Each day the construction department is called upon to deal with a hundred and one legal, engineering, architectural and electrical problems in order that you may be provided with theatres that are second to none in the world.

And that is what Union Entertainment means!

Sent in by David Jones

HOLIDAY SNAPS



The former **Paradise Theatre**, a Shanghai suburban cinema dating from 1931. It is now the base for an all-girl group SNH48 and is named accordingly. Photo November 2015 by Bob Bradshaw.



Not exactly a holiday snap but a photo of the demolition of the **Regal/ABC Woolwich** looking toward the former circle. Photo November 2015 by Martin Humm.

GOING... GOING... GONE?

CTA founder member Michael Darvell says farewell to a favourite film annual

Many members of the CTA will have been, in their time and back in the day, avid readers of *What's On In London* magazine and *Film Review* annual. Both publications were edited by F Maurice Speed, who was one of a number of graduates down from university in the 1930s, who decided London needed a general guide to the entertainments and other attractions of the Metropolis. *What's On* began in earnest in 1935 (it developed from a film magazine) and was the brand leader for many decades. It more or less had the field to itself regarding information and features about London entertainment until *Time Out* came along in 1968 to provide an alternative voice for the type of event *What's On* may not have covered, such as fringe theatre, alternative music and art and with a definite political slant in its agitprop pages.

What's On had several publishers over the years but not too many editors. Long-time contributor Kenneth Hurren took over in 1976 when Maurice retired as editor, although he stayed on as film reviewer until 1982. I joined the magazine in 1979 and subsequently became editor in 1991 after it had been sold to the publisher of *Where To Go In London* which offered much of the same coverage as *What's On*. Following another sale to a further publisher the magazine folded in 2007. By then *Time Out* was also struggling, mainly because every newspaper had its own listings sections, while growing online coverage meant that nobody needed to buy a listings paper for the *What's On* type of information. *Time Out* has changed and is now a free publication but without the authority it formerly had.

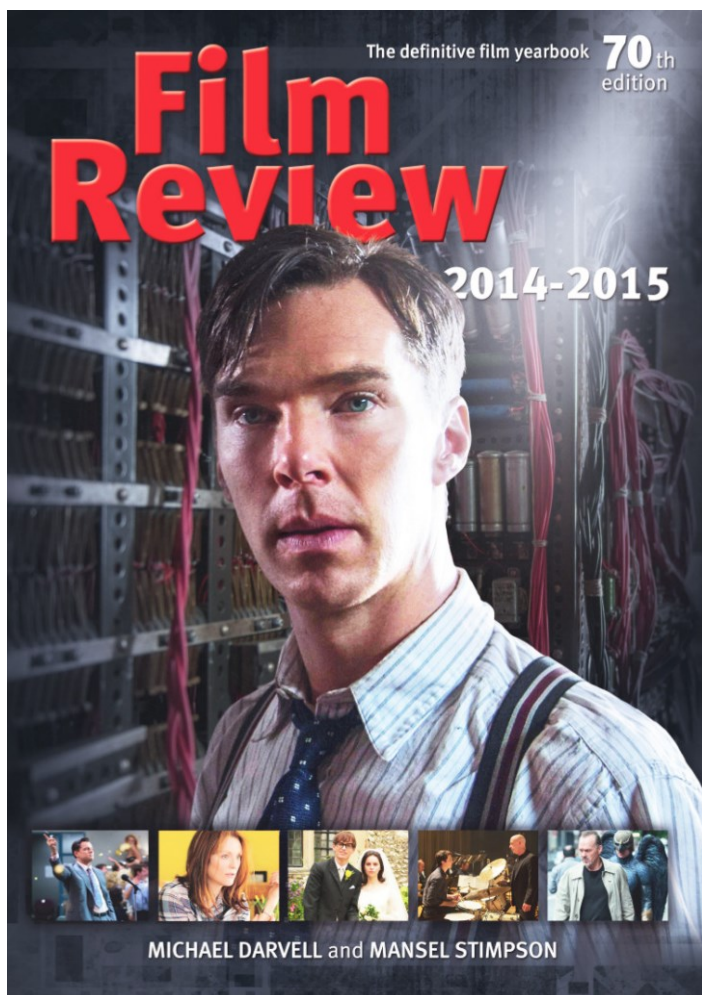
F Maurice Speed also had other ideas and in 1944 published what was the first of its kind, a volume covering the complete output of the cinema year, in capsule reviews of every film released in the UK during a period of twelve months. The first volume of what became *Film Review* annual covered some 350 films. Maurice then went on to edit the book for the next fifty years. Before he finally retired he was helped by co-editor James Cameron-Wilson, whom I first met

when I joined *What's On* as Features Editor. James carried on the good work, aided by a small handful of reviewers until 2007, when he handed over the editorship to myself and Mansel Stimpson, another *What's On* contributor who was already writing for *Film Review* annual. James has continued as Executive Editor of the book, the copyright of which Maurice Speed donated to him.

However, eight years on from 2007 and I am afraid *Film Review* annual has come to an end, or at any rate in its current published form as a book. We decided to leave on a round number, so that Volume 70 of *Film Review* is now the last to appear in print. In it we look back over the seventy years since F Maurice Speed decided that what the publishing world needed was an annual survey of the year's output in cinema. At the time he was "confident that such a book would fill a long-felt want." He was right, for the book was an instant success with a print-run of some 80,000 copies in 1944, while the following year saw it reach the giddy heights of 250,000. In Volume 70 I pay my own tribute to Maurice, while James Cameron-Wilson gives his appreciation of this remarkable, visionary man with whom he worked for so many years. Apart from *Film Review* and *What's On*, Maurice also produced several editions of *The Western Film Annual* and *The Western Film and TV Annual*, between 1950 and 1962. He also found time in 1944 to write a crime thriller called *They Rubbed Him Out* but under the pen name of John Lacey Cora.

Film historian and latterly *Film Review* annual's definitive obitulist, Jonathan Rigby, has scoured the pages of the fifty volumes of *Film Review* that Maurice edited from 1944 to 1994 and selected his opinions on all matters cinematographic, to present a digest of his editorial views on the good, the bad and the ugly at the movies and the course of various trends the cinema took over the half century of Maurice's tenure. Jonathan also gives a general survey of the content of the annual over seventy years and prints a list of which stars appeared on the book's dustjacket. Readers can check these out as all seventy are reprinted on the boards lying beneath the dustjacket of the final edition [below].





Apart from the tributes to F Maurice Speed, Volume 70 also includes all the regular features that have been an essential part of the yearly survey of the cinema: reviews and credits of some 500 films released in the UK during 2014, with details of the Top Box-Office Hits and Top Box-Office Stars; the Faces of the Year in accounts of the rising stars of the current cinema, as well as Faces of the Century, depicting how good earlier editions of Film Review were at talent-spotting; reports of all the major Awards and Festivals; Jonathan Rigby's exhaustive coverage of the obituaries of the year; and a preview of the films of 2015. James, Mansel and I have also selected our personal Top Ten favourite films released in the past seventy years, in a sort of Desert Island DVDs list.

If we are going out with a bang, by the time you read this, however, the *Film Review Daily* website will be up and running, continuing the work F Maurice Speed started over seventy years ago but now in a different format and perhaps for a new audience as well as the faithful readers the book acquired during its long history. You can carry on reading our reviews and features on [www.filmreviewdaily.com].

Film Review annual, Volume 70, is published by Signum Books at £19.99. Details on [www.signumbooks.com].

SMALL ADS

The rate for small ads from members is £3 for 25 words with name and address free, plus 15p for each extra word. Non-members rates: £5 & 25p respectively.

Please send cheque or postal order (payable to the Cinema Theatre Association) to the Bulletin Editor, address on p2. Please quote membership number.

Advertisers are requested to reply to all respondents who supply SAE for that purpose.

Display rates: eighth page – £15; quarter page – £25; half page (horizontal or vertical) – £45; full page – £80

WANTED: DVD or VHS copy of the 1960 comedy film *Follow That Horse* starring David Tomlinson. Will pay all costs.

John R Forster, 171 Castle Lane West, Bournemouth, BH9 3LE
or email: [beeps46@ntlworld.com]



MISCELLANY

ATTENBOROUGH'S TREASURES

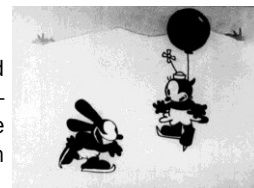
Film memorabilia and possessions belonging to the late Sir Richard (Lord) Attenborough have sold at a Bonham's auction for £750,000. The clapperboard used on *Ghandi* fetched £15,000 while his WWII RAF uniform went for £1,250.

Metro – 22 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

LUCKY RABBIT

A long-lost Disney cartoon has been found in the BFI archive. *Sleigh Bells* is a six-minute film from 1928 starring Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. A restored version was shown at the **BFI Southbank** on 12 December.

Daily Telegraph – 4 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth



4DX

CJ 4DPLEX, the South Korean company behind 4DX cinemas, has announced that admissions reached over 10 million in 2015. In 2015 over 70 titles were screened in the format, up 600% from the 10 titles available in 2009, the year 4DX was launched. *Jurassic World* in 4DX attracted 1.3 million attendees, recording over 55% occupancy rate. There are 215 4DX auditoria across 35 countries. It is thought that the **Cineworlds** at Milton Keynes, Sheffield and Crawley are the only ones in the UK at the time of writing. The technology has moving seats and wind, rain, fog, lightning, smells and bubbles. See [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4DX]

DCinema Today – 13 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth

LORD'S PRAYER

You will probably have seen on TV News and in the papers that a Church of England Christmas advert, in which the Archbishop of Canterbury and other recite the Lord's Prayer, has been banned from cinemas. The move brought a stinging attack from Britain's equality watchdog, which accused cinemas of undermining a tradition of free expression. Others claimed that it would set a precedent and other faiths would produce similar adverts. Some wonder why a commercial Christmas can be advertised but a religious one cannot. Actor Warwick Davis described it as "political correctness gone wild." The advert had been previously cleared by the Cinema Advertising Authority and given a [U] certificate. The Church of England was considering legal action.

In the 1950s and 1960s, a three-minute film called *Thought for the Day* was made by the Religious Film Society and distributed [although not necessarily shown] to all **Odeon** and **Gaumont** cinemas. In all, over 300 such shorts were made with a new one every three weeks. J Arthur Rank was a staunch Methodist and on every Good Friday a minister would be invited to the local **Odeon** or **Gaumont** to give a short address on stage. Your editor remembers one at the **Odeon Lancaster** in 1953. In some cases the minister was booed or cat-called! See also letters p32.

Daily Mail – 24 November; Mail on Sunday – 13 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton

BILLY ELLIOT BOWS OUT

The musical *Billy Elliot* is to end its run at the **Victoria Palace** theatre in London in April after eleven years. The theatre, designed by Frank Matcham, is due to close for twelve months for a major refurbishment; the timing will tie in with major redevelopment in the area. The stage will be extended by six metres to accommodate larger productions. The front-of-house will be enlarged and the auditorium restored. It is possible that a film of the musical may be made.



The Victoria Palace in April 2007

Daily Mail – 11 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

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)

ABERFELDY (Perth & Kinross)

Actor Alan Cumming, who is a patron of the **Birks** cinema, visited the venue with a TV crew from NBC. They were making a documentary about Scotland for the US market. The cinema reopened in April 2013 after a major refurbishment. {39010}

Perthshire Advertiser – 4 December

ALDERSHOT (Hants)



The **Palace** reopened on 18 December as a banqueting suite. It was last used as a music venue but that closed in 2013. The building is listed grade II. {4430}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken April 2006

Permission has been granted to convert the former **Odeon** into a multi-purpose venue. It will revert back to the building's original name of **Empire**; it was due to open on 16 January. Films will be part of the programming. The building opened in August 1930 with 1,599 seats and became the **Odeon** in January 1964. Films ceased in October 1981 and it was then used as a church; that moved out in August 2015. See p12 Bulletin 49/5. {4428}

Aldershot News & Mail – 18 November

ALVA (Clackmannanshire)



A Community Plan has been published for the town. One of its recommendations is that the now-empty former 800-seat **Hillfoot Picture House** should be smartened up. We know very little about this former cinema, except that the Scottish Screen Archive holds proprietor's papers dated 1930-1977 so we assume the cinema ran between these dates. Does anyone know more?

Alloa & Hillfoots Advertiser – 4 September; photo taken February 2007

ASHFORD (Kent)

Plans for a six-screen 897-seat cinema in Eldwick Road have been approved by the Council. No operator has been named. There is already a twelve-screen **Cineworld** on the outskirts of the town.

Kentish Express – 10 December; Ashford Herald – 17 December

BANBURY (Oxon)



A group of former employees has called for the **Grand Theatre** to be bought by the townspeople and turned back into an arts venue. It first opened in 1911 and started screening films in 1929. It was modernised in an Egyptian/Deco style and reopened in 1935 with 950 seats. It closed in December 1968 and was then on bingo for 30 years. By 2004 it had been converted into a Chicago Rock café, which closed in 2010. Many original features survive. Planning permission was granted in 2014 to partially demolish it and build flats and shops but nothing happened. Now the building is up for sale for £800,000. {27592} *photo taken February 2004*

Banbury Guardian – 29 October; sent in by Hugh Sykes;

BANGOR (Gwynedd)

Plans have been unveiled to build a multi-screen cinema at Parc Bryn Cegin, an industrial site that has been unused for 15 years. The developers are those behind the **Cineworld** at Llandudno Junction.

Daily Post (Wales) – 16 December; North Wales Chronicle – 17 December

BELFAST

The **Strand** has celebrated 80 years in the cinema business. It opened in December 1935 with 1,141 seats and closed in 1983. It was converted into four screens and reopened in 1984. It underwent a restoration in 1999. The CTA visited in September 2014 – see p16 Bulletin 49/1. {24058}

Belfast Telegraph – 5 December

BEVERLEY (East Yorks)

The opening of the six-screen **Parkway** cinema was delayed from the proposed date given on p13 of the last Bulletin. It opened 18 December with 1,000 seats; 108, 109, 170, 170, 183 and 260 in an auditorium that can also be used for live theatre. {51125}

Beverley Advertiser – 11, 25 November

BIRMINGHAM (Central)

The twelve-screen **Cineworld** in Broad Street is to get a 4DX screen. No time scale has been given. A sign caught fire outside the cinema in early December, causing the building to be evacuated; nobody was hurt. {24153}

Birmingham Mail – 29 October, 6 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BLAENAU FFESTINIOG (Gwynedd)

The former Police Station has been converted into an arts centre and now a cinema is being added. Funding of £90,000 has been secured to install a state-of-the-art digital system. Workers have discovered blocked-up staircases and the original plans for the 1850s building. Work should be completed by Easter. [\[www.cellb.org\]](http://www.cellb.org)

Daily Post (Wales) – 15 December

BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)

A meeting was held to find out residents' views on adding a fourth 114-seat screen to the Council-owned **Picturedrome**. A vote took place and the results were given to the Town Council, who approved the £850,000 project for an extension to the grade II listed building. Fitting out costs will be paid by the operator. Work should start in early February and the new screen should be open in the autumn.

[Bognor Regis Town Council Press Release – 14 December;](#)
[West Sussex Gazette – 18 November, 9 December; sent in by Mike Whitcombe](#)

BOTLEY (Oxford)

Plans for a six-screen cinema at the West Way development have been ditched and the size of the overall scheme reduced. The revised plans were described as a “step in the right direction” by local residents. It is thought that **Cineworld** were interested in operating the scrapped cinema.

[Oxford Mail – 21 November; Oxford Times – 10 December](#)

BOURNEMOUTH

The sites of the **Odeon** and **ABC** in Westover Road have been sold to developers. **Odeon**, which owns both sites, intends to move in 2017 to a new multiplex in the West Central complex. The main screens at both cinemas are thought to be the largest surviving in the south of England outside London. The façades of both buildings are expected to be retained. Campaigners have voiced their disappointment. The CTA visited last October – see report p8. The new ten-screen multiplex will have an **ISENSE** screen 18m by 10m and a Dolby Atmos sound system.

[Daily Echo \(Bournemouth\) – 10, 13, 16, 20 November, 8 December;](#)
[sent in by Carl Chesworth, John R Forster, Philip Stevens & Nick Taylor](#)

BRADFORD (West Yorks)

As trailed on p12 of the last Bulletin, the “high quality operator” to run the six-screen 780-seat cinema to be built in the extension to the recently-opened Broadway shopping centre has been revealed as **Light Cinemas**. Construction work is scheduled to begin in early 2016.

[Telegraph & Argus \(Bradford\) – 14, 24 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth](#)

BRECHIN (Angus)

The future of the Community Cinema has been given a boost following funding from NHS Tayside. It has been operating since April 2015 in the City Hall on Swan Street. See p19 Bulletin 49/3.

[Brechin Advertiser – 19 November](#)

BRIDGWATER (Somerset)

A plan has been put forward to regenerate the Northgate site, including a four to six-screen cinema. No operator has been mentioned.

[Western Daily Press – 30 November](#)

BRIGHTON

A study has recommended that the grade II* listed **Hippodrome** should become a “Theatre of Varieties”. It has featured on the Buildings at Risk register since 2009 and plagued with uncertainties about its future since it closed as a bingo hall in 2007. A plan to turn it into a multi-screen cinema was rejected. After the venue's sale to the Academy Music Group last June, the study was commissioned by a stakeholder group of seven organisations, including the Council and the Theatres Trust. The Brighton Hippodrome Community Interest Company is trying to secure £8m funding and hopes to be in a position to buy the building later this year.

[The Argus \(Brighton\) – 28 November; sent in by Barry Quinton;](#)
[The Stage – 10 December; sent in by R David Simpson](#)

The Music Room in the **Royal Pavilion** became a 115-seat cinema in November. Six classic films were screened in the lavish surroundings as part of the Ciné City Film Festival.

[The Argus \(Brighton\) – 26 November; sent in by Barry Quinton](#)

BRYNMAWR (Blaenau Gwent)

The **Market Hall Cinema** has been given the go-ahead to add a second screen. The 130-seat auditorium will fill the room behind the current 220-seat cinema, a space formerly occupied by the town library, which has moved across the road. Construction work is expected to start in February and take three months.

[South Wales Argus, Daily Post – 9 December; sent in by Nina Williams](#)

BUCKIE (Moray)

Pupils from the local High School successfully fought to bring a visit from Film Mobile Scotland. The local MSP supported the campaign.

[Press & Journal \(Aberdeen\) – 14 November](#)

CAERNARFON (Gwynedd)



Galeri Caernarfon is hoping to open two new cinema spaces as part of a £260,000 investment. The current arrangements require theatre and cinema to share the same 394-seat space. The new screens will have 120 and 80 seats. Plans should be finalised by May; work is due to start in early 2017 and opening is scheduled for 2018. {31746}

[North Wales Chronicle – 19 November](#)

CANTERBURY (Kent)

An eight to ten-screen cinema is being proposed for the Kingsmead site, along with student flats and homes. No operator has been named.

[Canterbury Times – 21 October](#)

CHELMSFORD (Essex)

A consortium in the running to turn Shire Hall into a boutique cinema used a DeLorean car to promote its bid for the grade II listed building. It coincided with *Back to the Future* day – 21 October 2015 – the date that characters in the 1985 film reach by time travel.

[Essex Chronicle – 29 October](#)

CLEVEDON (North Somerset)

A second screen is again planned for the **Curzon**. This time it would have 40-50 seats and be in a free-standing pod, installed on the refurbished balcony. The work would involve removing the current 1972 false ceiling and restoring the tin-panelled ceiling, which was installed when the cinema was enlarged in the 1920s. The work is expected to cost £3m and funding will be applied for this summer. See p30 and also p13 last Bulletin. {846}

[Bristol Post – 9 December; North Somerset Times – 16 December](#)

COLCHESTER (Essex)

Plans for a twelve-screen multiplex at Stane Park have been rejected by the Council. The developer is to appeal. The operator was going to be **Cineworld**. Outline planning permission exists for a cinema at the Northern Gateway. Plans for another one at Tollgate Village were set to be debated by the Council in December.

[Essex County Standard – 4 December](#)

Curzon has signed a deal with the Council for a three-screen cinema in Roman House, the former Keddies department store. No time scale has been given.

[Essex County Standard – 4 December; East Anglian Daily Times – 7 December](#)

CRAWLEY (West Sussex)

The **Cineworld** opened a 4DX screen in November. A major refurbishment of the complex is scheduled to start in January. New seats and carpets will be installed in all fifteen auditoria and the foyer will get a renovation. The multiplex opened in 1998 as a **Virgin**. {24652}

[Crawley News – 25 November; West Sussex County Times – 26 November;](#)
[sent in by Norman Pemberton](#)

DARLINGTON

The restoration of the **Majestic** continues. A soft play facility for youngsters is already open on the lower level. In December two bars opened upstairs. Original accents like the coving and staircase have been restored. Stained glass windows that had been painted with thick, tar-like paint have been uncovered. Further plans include a 240-seat auditorium. The building opened in December 1932 and became an **Odeon** in April 1945. That closed in October 1981 and it was later used for snooker. {26571}

[Northern Echo – 9 December](#)

DEAL (Kent)

A planning application to reopen the **Regent** as a cinema was due to be submitted before the end of 2015. Delays have been caused due to discussions with the Council about the car park at the rear of the building. The building has been declared an Asset of Community Value. {32928}

[East Kent Mercury – 19 November; sent in by Martin Tapsell](#)

DERBY

A £5m insurance pay-out has been made to the Council after the **Assembly Rooms** fire, raising questions as to why the money cannot be used to reopen it. The Council said it would not be cost effective as the actual cost would be £10m and the life expectancy only a decade. It says some of the money covers loss of revenue from not being able to hold events there. {45029}

[Derby Telegraph – 16 November; sent in by Peter Good](#)

DONCASTER (South Yorks)

Planning permission has been granted for a six-screen 984-seat cinema in the town centre. It will be operated by **Savoy** Cinemas. Construction is due to start in spring 2016 and be completed by early 2017. The former **ABC** still lies empty in the town centre.

[Yorkshire Post – 12 December; Doncaster Free Press – 17 December](#)

DRIFFIELD (East Yorks)

As trailed on p14 of the last Bulletin, permission has been granted to show movies at **Market House**. The cinema opened on 24 October with *Minions*. Initially family films will be screened on Saturdays before introducing films aimed at adults and senior citizens on Thursday afternoons. The number of showings is planned to increase in the future.

[Driffield Times & Post – 22 October](#)

DUDLEY

Just one group has come forward with plans to save the **Hippodrome** from demolition. An independent assessor will now analyse the proposals. The Council has set a deadline of the end of 2015 for a final decision. The Council has meanwhile put in a counter proposal to demolish the building.

[Express & Star – 6, 25 November; sent in by Ivan Harris](#)

ECCLES (Salford)



Developers have withdrawn plans to demolish the former **Crown Theatre** following objections by the Theatres Trust and Historic England. A revised application will be submitted later this year. It opened as a 2,500-seat theatre in February 1899. It became a cinema in 1932 until 1963 when bingo took over. The building has been empty since that closed around 2000. {2055}

[The Stage – 18 December; photo taken July 2005](#)

EXETER (Devon)

A 74-seat solar powered cinema is to be constructed on the roof of the **Phoenix** after the venue was awarded £12,500 funding from the Marks and Spencer Energy Funding scheme; it will be called **Studio74**. This is the second grant the **Phoenix** has had recently; it received £320,000 from the Arts Council last February to create better facilities. See p14 Bulletin 49/5.

[Express & Echo \(Exeter\) – 15 October, 14 December](#)

FAREHAM (Hants)

The nine-screen **Cineworld** at Whiteley opened on 19 November.

[Southern Daily Echo – 4 November; sent in by Ian Patterson](#)

GLASGOW (Central)

The 60-seat screen ③ at the **Glasgow Film Theatre** has been praised at the Scottish Design Awards ceremony. The four-month project cost £870,000 and was completed whilst the remainder of the cinema was still open to the public. {20949}

[Glasgow Evening Times – 3 November](#)

December storms ripped a roof panel off the top of the 203ft tall **Cineworld**, the world's tallest cinema building. {27079}

[The Scottish Sun – 6 December](#)

GUILDFORD (Surrey)

The Council is considering proposals for the 220-seat **Electric Theatre**, which it owns and currently subsidises. Two cinema companies are said to be interested, along with a church and an amateur theatre. The venue is housed in a former electricity works of 1913.

[Surrey Advertiser – 27 November](#)

HANLEY (Stoke-on-Trent)

The new 1,100-seat nine-screen **Cineworld** opened on 18 December with the new Star Wars film. {51128}

[The Sentinel – 17 October](#)

HINCKLEY (Leics)

The new five-screen 787-seat **Cineworld** opened on 4 December in the Crescent development. An escalator leads to the first-floor foyer. The largest screen has 178 seats. There is a gallery of photos on the *Hinckley Times* website at [tinyurl.com/hnsjdp8]. The opening inspired the newspaper to publish articles and photos of former cinemas in the town at [tinyurl.com/gvbd6rt] & [tinyurl.com/gmmqln3] & [tinyurl.com/jkrsngw]. {51127}

[Sent in by Ken Roe](#)

HOLYHEAD (Anglesey / Ynys Môn)

Proposals for a 30-seat second screen at the **Empire** have been backed by its Council owners. No time scale has been given for the £250,000 project, which would take over an adjacent flat. The current 159-seat screen is located in the former circle. The bingo area downstairs has been converted into a children's play centre. {26593}

[Bangor Mail – 9 December; North Wales Chronicle – 10 December](#)

HUDDERSFIELD (West Yorks)

A multiplex cinema is part of £17m plans for redevelopment of the town centre. Work is scheduled to start at the end of 2016 and take about 18 months. There is already an out-of-town eight-screen **Odeon**.

[Huddersfield Daily Examiner – 4 December](#)

HULL (East Yorks)



Plans have been approved for alterations to the grade II listed **New Theatre**. The rear will be partially demolished and a new extension built, increasing the height of the fly tower by about 5m. Curved canopies over the main entrance will be removed and internal alterations made to provide new front and back of house facilities. The seating capacity will be increased from its current 1,159. The building was designed as the Assembly Rooms in 1830 and became the **New Theatre** in 1939. The planning application can be seen at [tinyurl.com/z8qm7z2].

[Sent in by David Alexander; photo taken July 2005](#)

IPSWICH (Suffolk)

Empire Cinemas has signed up to operate the twelve-screen cinema being created in the Buttermarket Centre. Opening is scheduled for the end of 2016.

[East Anglian Daily Times – 25 November](#)

IRTHLINGBOROUGH (Northants)

New plans have been submitted to redevelop the former home of Rushden and Diamonds Football Club at Nene Park. Developers want to demolish the old stadium and build a retail and leisure development, including an eight-screen cinema.

[Northants Telegraph – 18 December](#)

KIRKCALDY (Fife)

The project to reopen the **Kings Theatre** as an entertainment venue has reached its first funding target of £8,000 by crowd funding. This will pay for an in-depth structural report on the building and a full building survey. The initial priority of the group is to make the building watertight. See p15 Bulletin 49/5. {23081}

[Dundee Courier – 19 November, 14 December](#)

Vue Cinemas has confirmed that it is still interested in bringing a cinema to the town. It is believed to be considering the site of the former swimming pool.

[Fife Free Press – 17 December; Dundee Courier – 18 December](#)

LEEDS (West Yorks)

Work on the expansion of the White Rose Shopping Centre will begin this spring. The scheme will be anchored by a new eleven-screen **Cineworld** with **IMAX** technology. Completion is scheduled for 2017.

[Yorkshire Evening Post – 11 November](#)

LISKEARD (Cornwall)

Plans for the Tencreek Farm development have been altered to leave space for a cinema.

[Cornish Times – 23 October](#)

LIVERPOOL (Central)

Save Britain's Heritage has called for a judicial review of redevelopment plans for Lime Street, which involve the demolition of the **Futurist**. The group is willing to withdraw that application if plans are modified but the Mayor of Liverpool has said "There is no plan B." Local campaign group Save the Futurist is in support of the proposals. The legal challenge was due to be held at the High Court in Manchester on 18 December. See Letters p33. {6508}

[Liverpool Echo – 22, 27 October, 18 December](#)

LIVERPOOL (Everton)



The former **Derby** cinema in Scotland Road is to be converted into apartments and shops. It opened in October 1912 in what had been a Methodist Church. It closed in May 1960 with *Carry On Teacher* and became a funeral directors' establishment. The building has been empty since they moved out about ten years ago. {44871}

[Bootle Champion – 4 November; photo taken July 2007](#)

LONDON (Bayswater)

Plans have been revealed for a £1bn development of the grade II listed Whiteleys building. It would be demolished, apart from the original façade and a number of other historic features. New homes, a hotel, shops and a multiplex cinema would be built instead. No time scale has been given. The centre is already home to a nine-screen **Odeon** (ex **UCI**). {21181}

[West End Extra – 20 November](#)

LONDON (Chadwell Heath)



I was in Chadwell Heath last August and noticed that the local cinema was empty. It was built as the **Embassy** and opened in 1934, subsequently changing its name to **Gaumont Palace / Gaumont / Odeon** and finally closing on 28 July 1966 to be converted into a Top Rank Club. Although a local standing display shows it as a bingo hall, the premises were closed when I visited. The building appears to be in good condition. The signage shows it called **Mayfair Venue** and a telephone number. A later report confirms the building was opened as a banqueting suite by the mayor in mid-December. The original décor has been retained and renovated. {14646}

[Ilford Recorder – 17 December; additional information & photo from Ian Patterson](#)

LONDON (Chalk Farm)

Permission has been granted to demolish the former Marine Ices building and put up a three-screen cinema. There will be two screens in the basement and one on the ground floor. 19 flats are also included in the scheme. No operator has been named.

[Camden New Journal – 22 October](#)

LONDON (Crouch End)

The four-screen **Picturehouse** opened on 27 November. All screens have digital projection but there are also facilities for 35mm. The building, a conversion of an office block with new additions, is on the site of the **Picture House / Perfect / Plaza** cinema, which opened in 1911 and closed in 1940. The **Picturehouse** is just a few yards from the two-screen **Art House** that opened in 2014, so after 75 years without a cinema, Crouch End now has two! See p23 Bulletin 48/5. {50435}

[Ham & High – 22 October; sent in by Jeremy Buck;](#)

[PictureHouse Cinemas magazine vol39 – sent in by Barry Quinton](#)

Editor's Note: I was pleased to read that the new cinema has an indoor bike rack for 22 bikes.

LONDON (Dalston)



On Sunday 15 November the **Rio** celebrated its centenary by showing two films from 1915, the year it was built; *Regeneration* and *The Cheat*. They used the correct 4 x 3 masking and screen curtains. This delightful independent cinema is well worth a visit, with an interesting eclectic mix of films. [see next page]

[Sent in by Stuart Smith; photo taken April 2006](#)

AE writes: It is the centenary of cinema use on the site. The **Rio** actually dates from 1937 as a reconstruction of the 1915 **Kingsland Empire**, although upper parts of the earlier cinema auditorium survive out of view above the ceiling of the newer one. It is because of FE Bromige's brilliant makeover for the **Classic** repertory circuit that it is a listed building. It has only been called the **Rio** since 1976. See "FE Bromige Cinema Architect" in *Picture House* No 25, Autumn 2000, including colour front cover of the **Rio**'s interior.

LONDON (Elephant & Castle)



The **Coronet** (ex **ABC**) has announced it will close on 5 January 2017 after a long-fought battle to keep the venue open. The lease has been extended until then, as it was due to expire in November 2015. It is still unclear what will happen to the building. A listing application has been refused – see Casework p7. {27019} [photo March 2004](#)
[The Stage – 12, 26 November; sent in by R David Simpson](#)

LONDON (Hammersmith)

Plans for a new cinema and theatre cultural quarter on the site of the former **Riverside Studios** have been called into question over a multi-million pound funding shortfall. The old building was demolished in 2014; the CTA paid a visit just before the bulldozers arrived.

[Evening Standard – 16 December](#)

LONDON (Hornchurch)

There was a full house for the last bingo session at the **Towers/Odeon**. The event, ticketed at £20 per head, included live music, a free buffet and a hot drink. The site has been sold to supermarket chain Lidl and the building will probably be demolished. The CTA's application for listing was refused. See Casework p7 this Bulletin and pages 6 & 17 last Bulletin. {13777}

[Romford Recorder – 6 November](#)

LONDON (Shepherds Bush)



The 2,200-seat grade II listed **Shepherds Bush Empire** has been forced to close until at least the end of 2015 following a roof inspection. Operators the Academy Music Group have apologised to customers and events have been cancelled or moved elsewhere. {27937}

[Evening Standard – 8 December; sent in by R David Simpson; photo taken April 2006](#)

LONDON (Walthamstow)



Plans to demolish the former **Cameo** at Bell Corner and build flats have been refused by the Council. It opened as the **Empire** in February 1913 and was renamed **Cameo** in March 1961. It closed as a regular cinema in August 1963 and became a bingo club, showing Bollywood films on Sundays. It reopened as a **Tatler** cinema club in April 1970 screening uncensored sex films. This closed in August 1981 and the building became a snooker club, which still operates. {22759}

[Waltham Forest Guardian – 5 November; sent in by David Jones; photo taken August 2013](#)

A 'pop-up' bar, called Mirth, Marvel and Maud opened in the foyer areas of the Grade II* listed former **Granada / EMD** on 10 December. The opening night was packed. It is operated by the Antic Pub Company, who acquired the building in 2014. The former café area of the cinema is still in use as a pub, the Victoria, which was the name of the music hall that occupied the site before the cinema was built. {9397}

[Waltham Forest Guardian – 10 December; sent in by Jeremy Buck & Nigel Pitt](#)

LONDON (Waterloo)

A 161-seat cinema has opened in the vaults underneath Waterloo Station in Launcelot Street. The **Underground Film Club** screens current and classic films. It operates five nights a week and there is a bar. [undergroundfilmclub.com] {50178}

[Sent in by Philip Stevens](#)

LONDON (West Norwood)

Plans have been approved for a four-screen cinema and library in the former Nettlefield Hall. The cinema will be operated by **Picturehouse**. The building closed in 2011 after the copper roof was stolen and subsequently occupied by squatters, who caused £150,000 worth of damage. The new complex is expected to be open by 2017.

[South London Press – 20 October](#)

LONDON (Wood Green)



The Grade II* listed former **Gaumont Palace** now has the name illuminated, thanks to funds from a TfL scheme to improve Wood Green High Road. The sign is not the original one but is a fairly accurate reproduction. The building is now called the Dominion Centre and operates as a church, with a nightclub operation in the former café area. {17332}

[Sent in by Jeremy Buck; photo taken September 2004](#)



If the plans for the new Crossrail 2 railway go ahead, the building that contains the six-screen **Vue** multiplex could be demolished to excavate a new station underground. The cinema opened as the **Showcase** in 2001. After work is completed, a replacement building would be built. If the plans are approved, work is not likely to start until 2030. {21105}

Sent in by Jeremy Buck; photo taken September 2004

MANCHESTER (Central)



The Great Northern Warehouse is to have a revamp. Apartments are to be built in the grade II* listed former railway goods dépôt. The current sixteen-screen **AMC** multiplex in the centre will stay but will be reduced in size. The project will be rolled out in phases from 2016 until 2025. {25057} *photo taken July 2006*

Manchester Evening News – 3 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth

Plans have been submitted for a restaurant with a cinema downstairs at 33 Piccadilly. Only diners will be able to watch films, with a three-course meal and movie priced at £20. The venue would be aimed at a “well-heeled” clientele. The company behind the venture already operates similar locations in Peterborough and Cambridge.

Manchester Evening News – 26 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Nick Taylor

MARGATE (Kent)

The former **Parade** is being converted into an indoor market and was scheduled to open at the beginning of December. The centrepiece will be a double-decker bus serving fish and chips. The building was last used for snooker. See p20 Bulletin 48/4. {32925}

Isle of Thanet Gazette – 13 November; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

CIRCUIT HISTORIES AVAILABLE

by Allen Eyles – all fully illustrated with gazetteers

ODEON 1 – Oscar Deutsch Entertains Our Nation £19.99

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THE GRANADA THEATRES £18.99

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

MARKET WARSOP (Notts)



More than 500 people have signed a petition calling for the former **Strand** to be demolished. It has been empty since bingo closed in October 2011. If permission is granted for a supermarket, the auditorium will be demolished but the façade must be retained. The cinema opened in 1936 with 785 seats and films ceased in 1961. The CTA visited in May 2008 – see p9 Bulletin 42/5. {24488}

Ashfield Chad – 21 October; photo taken July 2004

MIDSOMER NORTON (NE Somerset)

Permission has been granted to turn the former **Palladium** into a JD Wetherspoon's pub. The decision had been delayed over bat protection issues and access concerns. No start or opening dates have been given. See p21 Bulletin 49/2. {28883}

Somerset Guardian – 10 November

MONIAIVE (Dumfries & Galloway)

The landlord of the Craigdarroch Hotel has applied for a cinema licence. He has transformed former stables at the back of the hotel into a 50-seat cinema. The opening night was scheduled for 30 October. We have been unable to find out if the application was successful.

Dumfries & Galloway Standard – 14 October

NEWPORT (South Wales)

The grade II listed former **Odeon** is to show its first film for 35 years after a £750,000 refurbishment. It was up for sale in early 2015 [see p24 Bulletin 49/3] and was bought by a local electrical contractor. A 2,000 capacity auditorium will be part of the continuing renovation work and is due to open on 27 February. {3420}

South Wales Argus – 9 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth

NORWICH

Plans have been approved for a Screen Heritage Centre at **Cinema City**. The project attracted a Lottery grant of £500,000 in 2014 but there have been delays due to obtaining match funding and on-site issues. Work is due to begin in February.

Evening News (Norwich) – 15 December; sent in by Les Woods

NOTTINGHAM



The **Savoy** celebrated its 80th birthday on 7 November 2015. It had 1,242 seats when it opened in 1935 with *Flirtation Waltz*. The cinema was tripled in 1972 with 392 seats in the former circle and two smaller screens underneath; a fourth screen was later added. The CTA visited in May 2008. {17336}

Nottingham Post – 6 November; photo taken May 2006

OMAGH (Co Tyrone, Northern Ireland)



The seven-screen **Studio** has been acquired by Irish Multiplex Cinemas, bringing their total to 19 cinemas in Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic. The cinema will receive a full refurbishment costing £2m and an increase in the number of screens. The CTA viewed the exterior in September 2014. {26732}

[Ulster Herald, Tyrone Constitution – 10 December; photo taken on CTA visit](#)

PAIGNTON (Devon)

The Paignton Picture House Trust has successfully completed the purchase of the **Torbay Picture House** from the Dartmouth Steam Railway. The sale was made possible by a £40,000 grant from Historic England with extra funding from Torbay Council; the CTA also made a donation. The aim is to reopen it as a cinema and community centre. {22124}

[Herald Express \(Torquay\) – 11 November;](#)

[Western Morning News – 13 November; sent in by Richard Jones](#)

PAISLEY (Renfrew)

There are plans for a £40m entertainment development in the town. Proposals are to create a 500-seat main theatre, a five-screen cinema, a café/bar, restaurant and educational hub.

[Paisley Daily express – 11 December](#)

PERTH

£30m plans for the Mill Quarter development are to be submitted to the Council. They include – yes, you've guessed it again – a multiplex cinema on the Thimbelrow car park site.

[Dundee Courier – 7 December; Evening Telegraph \(Dundee\) – 8 December](#)

PETERBOROUGH (Cambs)

Theatre impresario Bill Kenwright has announced he is bringing a series of major productions to the **Broadway Theatre**. The theatre has been dark, except for occasional shows staged by local groups, since Mr Kenwright previous run of shows two years ago. Prior to that the theatre has had financial troubles and suffered a serious fire. It was converted from the former **Odeon** and de-tripled in 2001. {19950}

[Peterborough Telegraph – 10 September; sent in by R David Simpson](#)

PLYMOUTH

Contracts have been signed for a 12-screen **Cineworld** at Bretonside. It will have 4DX screen and a 450-seat **IMAX** auditorium with an 18m tall screen. Construction is expected to start later this year with completion scheduled for July 2018. A gallery of artist's impressions and a 'fly-through' video are on the *Plymouth Herald* website at: [tinyurl.com/pxu8w5y].

[The Herald \(Plymouth\) – 11 November; Construction Enquirer – 10 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth](#)

An old advert for the **ABC** dating back about 40 years was revealed when a hoarding on the side of a travel agent's was taken down. A crack in the wall will be repaired and the sign painted over. The cinema is now the three-screen **Reel**. {24749}

[Plymouth Herald – 2 May; sent in by Richard Jones](#)



Editor's Note: I'm sure this has happened before and the Bulletin carried the story – but I can't find it. The photo above is dated 2001.

PORTRUSH (Co Antrim, Northern Ireland)

The vacant Dunluce Centre could be transformed into a cinema. "Significant interest" is being shown by an [unnamed] cinema chain.

[Coleraine Chronicle – 19 November](#)

RAMSGATE (Kent)

Plans for the redevelopment of the **West Cliff Hall** have been on show to the public. The plans include a three-screen cinema and a 140-seat theatre with retractable seats. An alternative plan by Wetherspoons to turn it into a pub has been deemed invalid by the Council until further information is received. The building was last used as a motor museum but has been empty since that closed in 2005.

[Isle of Thanet Gazette – 4, 11 December; sent in by Margaret Burgoine](#)

READING

The fourteen-screen **Showcase** has had a major refurbishment and been rebranded **Showcase de Lux**. One auditorium has been upgraded to an XPlus screen with a Dolby Atmos sound system. Reclining seating has been fitted in all screens and the lobby and bar have been renovated. The cinema is midway between Reading and Wokingham. {25254}

[Bracknell & Wokingham Weekender – 26 November](#)

REDHILL (Surrey)

Plans for a cinema on the Market Way development went for a decision on 15 October. We have been unable to find out if the application was successful.

[Surrey Mirror – 15 October](#)

RUSHDEN (Northants)

Plans have been revealed for a twelve-screen cinema as part of the Rushden Lakes development. Contracts have been exchanged with **Cineworld**, who will be the operator if plans are approved. Construction could start in summer 2017.

[Northants Telegraph – 17 November; Sent in by Margaret Burgoine](#)

SCARBOROUGH (North Yorks)

Planning permission has been granted for a multiplex cinema at North Bay. The outline plans must still be signed off by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the design of the building must be agreed before work can commence. No operator has been mentioned.

[Scarborough News – 22 October](#)

SEVENOAKS (Kent)



The former **Carlton** may well disappear into flats. It is not clear whether that means conversion or demolition. It opened in September 1935, an extensive rebuild of an earlier cinema. Seating was provided for 325 in the stalls and 70 in the circle. It closed around 1954 and was converted into factory spaces. The last tenant, a surgical instrument company, has recently moved out. {34807}

[Sent in by Tim McCullen; photo taken April 2006](#)

SHEFFIELD

The Meadowhall shopping centre is planning a major expansion, which will include a second cinema. There is already an eleven-screen **Vue** (ex **Warner Village**) in the centre, which opened in March 1993.

[The Star \(Sheffield\) – 20 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth](#)

The **Abbeydale** housed a Christmas market on 13 December. See also p28. {22681}

[The Star \(Sheffield\) – 2 December](#)

SMETHWICK (Sandwell & Dudley)



The grade II listed former **Gaumont** was auctioned on 3 December, fetching £539,000, nearly twice the guide price of £275,000. It opened in July 1930 as the **Rink** cinema with 1,950 seats; it was built on the site of a former skating rink, which itself had been converted into a cinema. It was renamed **Gaumont** in 1949 and closed in February 1964. It became a bingo hall, which closed around 2005. It was then converted into a banqueting suite known as the Victoria Suite. {20722}

Birmingham Post – 26 November; Express & Star – 27 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Christopher Ingram; photo taken May 2006

SOUTH SHIELDS (South Tyneside)

The stalls area of the former **Gaumont** in South Shields has just opened as a cocktail bar known as Tinker Smiths. The entrance lobby and foyer area had been operating as The Vibe bar for several years. The cinema was developed from the original Royal Assembly Hall in 1919 as the **Scala**. It became **Gaumont** in 1950 and was sold by Rank to the **Focus** chain in 1974. It was then sold to another independent operator and closed as the **Regal** in 1982. The circle area is unused and blocked off. South Shields previously had a **Regal** Cinema when Blacks redeveloped the **Empire Theatre** as a super cinema in 1935. This became the **Odeon** in 1945. It became Top Rank Bingo in 1962 but was closed and demolished in 1982. Only the front entrance building remains and is currently a vacant shop. The **Regent** Cinema, also opened in 1935, which was closed recently by Mecca Bingo, is up for sale. I have heard that in the two years prior to closure the ceiling had been in a very poor state of repair and that the circle was out of use with all electrics shut off above the ground floor. {28595}

Sent in by Eddie McNamee

SOUTHAMPTON

Solent University's 3D cinema has been fitted with a Dolby Atmos sound system. The Beijing Film Academy is the only other university in the world to install the system, making Solent University the first in Europe to have it. As well as being able to present films in the new format, the system will allow students produce mixes for moving images.

Southampton Daily Echo – 17 October; sent in by Ian Patterson

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA

Plans for the Seaway car park have been revised; proposed flats have been dropped and a hotel added but a ten-screen cinema remains in the plans. Two cinema operators are said to be interested. There is a rival project at the new Southend United stadium at Fossett Park, which includes a **Cineworld** multiplex. The MD of the Seaway scheme says he will try to push it through before the rival gets permission.

Southend Standard – 11 December

ST ALBANS (Herts)

Owner of the **Odyssey** (ex **Odeon**) James Hannaway has been prosecuted by the HSE and fined after he allowed refurbishment of the cinema in April 2012 without a proper check for asbestos. A survey was eventually carried out in October 2012, which identified the presence of asbestos in the building. {18474}

Construction Enquirer – November; HSE website – 26 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

AE writes: According to James Hannaway, writing in the January 2016 programme of his other restored cinema, the **Rex** Berkhamsted, there was an existing report done on asbestos before work began and two areas of asbestos noted in it were cordoned off throughout the work. A second report commissioned by the project management team identified additional areas as positive for asbestos. By this time, many hundreds had visited the building and possibly been exposed to this additional asbestos, although a third, more recent report queries whether there were in fact any further areas of asbestos. Hannaway was found in court to have been negligent in not having invited a second report and calls this “the fair and just decision of the Court”. He notes that, on the same day as the hearing, he was awarded a prize by the St Albans Civic Society for an outstanding contribution to the town.

STOKE-ON-TRENT (Staffs)



The ten-screen **Odeon** at Festival Park is to undergo its first transformation since it opened in 1989. The outside of the building will also be modernised. The move comes after a new nine-screen **Cineworld** opened nearby in Hanley (see entry above). {25394}

The Sentinel – 19 December; photo taken May 2003

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON (Warks)

Plans have been approved for a four-screen **Everyman** cinema at Bell Court. Opening is scheduled for spring 2017. The town already has a two-screen **Picturehouse**.

Stratford Observer – 3 December; Coventry Telegraph – 8 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock

TAUNTON (Somerset)

Plans have been submitted for a waterfront development on the former livestock market, incorporating a cinema. No operator has been mentioned.

Western Daily Press – 30 November

The **Brewhouse Theatre** has launched a £40k crowdfunding appeal to install a new cinema in its 350-seat auditorium. Their website [www.thebrewhouse.net] has details and a history of the venue.

Somerset County Gazette – 3 December

When I was in Taunton in September, I noticed that the former **Gaiety** cinema had been demolished. A member of the nearby railway station staff told me that he understood that a residential development was planned for the site. It may well be underway by now. {44384}

Sent in by Mike Collins

TEIGNMOUTH (Devon)

The new **Pavilions** Arts Centre is due to open this spring. Films will be part of the programming in the 210-seat auditorium. It is being built on the site of the former **Carlton** Theatre. [www.teignbridge.gov.uk/pavilions] The grade II listed former **Riviera** cinema still stands close by; the ground floor is a bar and flats have been built on the roof but it is believed the upper level of the auditorium is still there – disused. Does anyone know?

Herald Express (Torquay) – 18 November

THURSO (Highland)

The two-screen **Cinema** reopened in November, taken over by Merlin Cinemas. It had closed under previous owners as HM Revenue and Customs had issued a winding up order [see p21 last Bulletin]. Merlin Cinemas operates cinema in the South West and Cromer; they now operate the cinemas closest to both Lands' End and John-O'Groats! {27141}

The Scotsman – 3 November; The Herald (Glasgow) – 18 November; Press & Journal (Highlands) – 2, 19 November; Caithness Courier – 30 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

TUNBRIDGE WELLS (Kent)

The Royal Victoria shopping centre has unveiled plans for a major redesign, which includes an eight-screen cinema on the roof.

Kent on Sunday – 25 October; *Kent & Sussex Courier* – 6 November

WEST BROMWICH (Sandwell & Dudley)



The former **Kings** cinema is up for sale for £2.2m. It was opened in June 1975 with three screens, being a replacement for the old cinema of the same name. It was the first purpose-built multi-screen cinema in the UK. It closed in September 2002 and the ground floor was later converted into retail units. {47864}

Express & Star – 4 December; sent in by Ivan Harris; photo by David Simpson

YORK

A new 13-screen cinema including an **IMAX** screen is to be built next to the new York Community Stadium at Vangarde Way near the Monks Cross retail park at Huntington. Work is due to start in March with completion targeted for spring 2017. No operator has been named.

The Press (York) – 30 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

NOSFERATU AT THE ABBEYDALE

By Mike Wood

Curious to see how Sheffield's **Abbeydale Picture House** was getting on after the hiatus three years ago when the last group of enthusiasts ran out of financing, I decided to escape the trick-or-treat nonsense and have a truly scary Halloween with FW Murnau's 1922 classic silent *Nosferatu*. Presented by Holmfirth Silents, with live piano accompaniment and in glorious tinted black and white 35mm film clattering through the gate, to a full house of mostly young people, it was a magical experience.

The recently installed Academy ratio screen fills the original proscenium without supplementary masking but retaining the original pelmet. There is no sign of the fire curtain and its fifties advertising but this is hopefully still in situ and the false proscenium for CinemaScope remains in place. However the temporary fore-stage has now gone, along with the drop wall from the barrel-vaulted ceiling to the balcony front and the partitions at the rear of the stalls, thus revealing almost the entire auditorium again that originally held 1,560 seated patrons.

I am trying to think of another cinema of this period and size that plays film to an enthusiastic full house, with acknowledgement to the bigger and later **Plaza** Stockport of course. Even Count Orlok put in an appearance as his shadow crossed the screen a couple of times but didn't come out in my photographs!

If you manage to visit for a film or other event, take a few minutes to look at the historical photos and plans of the **Abbeydale** and other Sheffield cinemas on display upstairs in the circle foyer.

Photo on front cover.

Links: [www.abbeydalepicturehouse.com] [www.holmfirthsilents.com]

Editor's Note: The first performance on 31 October was sold out well in advance, so a second showing was arranged for the following day. The 35mm projectors were provided and manned by our friends in the Projected Picture Trust – see p16.

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CINEMA BUSINESS

CINEMAS FAIL TO BOND ON PRICING

Two of Britain's largest cinema chains have traded blows over the 'blockbuster premiums'. **Cineworld** criticised **Odeon** for charging a premium to see *Spectre*, *The Hunger Games* and *Star Wars*. **Odeon** defended the charge by saying it gave away vouchers for other screenings. **Cineworld's** revenue rose 12% for the 46 weeks to 19 November. **Odeon's** rose 13% in the third quarter.

The Times – 25 November; sent in by Mike Whitcombe

BLOCKBUSTERS

Odeon Cinemas screened the new James Bond movie *Spectre* into the night when it was released at the end of October. At the **Odeon** Leicester Square the last screening was at 3am and that at 9am the following day was sold out. It broke UK Box Office records by taking £6.3m on its opening day. **Odeon** recruited 500 extra staff and expected to sell 350 tons of popcorn in the 12 weeks following the Bond opening. Four kissing scenes were cut from *Spectre* ahead of its release in India in November.

For the new *Star Wars* film, twelve **Odeons** opened on Christmas Day at Glasgow Quay, Greenwich, Leeds Bradford, Leicester, London Leicester Square, London Marble Arch, Manchester Printworks, Milton Keynes Stadium & Rochdale. It broke the UK Box Office record for advance sales seven weeks before it opened. Bookies are offering odds of 16-1 that it will challenge 2009's *Avatar* as the biggest grossing film of all time. The film was also screened two days in advance of opening on four Air France flights from the USA to Paris.

Metro – 22 October, 20 November; *Evening Standard* – 27 October; *Daily Mirror* – 31 October; *Daily Telegraph* – 1 November, 12 December; **Odeon** Press Release – 17 December; sent in by Keith Bye & Carl Chesworth

The live broadcast of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* has become the highest grossing film in the UK on its night of screening. The three-hour long play, starring Dame Judi Dench and Sir Kenneth Branagh took £1.1m for its broadcast from London to 120 cinemas. The performance was also broadcast to over 100 cinemas across Europe and Canada but the box office from those is not known. It was also broadcast in a delayed transmission to the United States and Australia.

Daily Telegraph – 28 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth

DAFT ADA

Star Wars fans have been banned from wearing Darth Vader helmets during screening of the new film at **Odeon** cinemas. The chain has also asked fans to keep light sabres sheathed. The UK Cinema Association said, "It's not a great viewing experience if you're seated behind an eight-foot Chewbacca outfit." Other cinema chains have issued similar bans.

The Sun – 12 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

IMAX RIGHTS

It has been revealed that because the rights to the **IMAX** brand belong to **Odeon**, **Cineworld** cannot use the name in its new cinemas; instead they will feature a 'Superscreen'. The first to be affected will be Warrington (Cheshire) scheduled to open in 2019.

Warrington Guardian – 29 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

ADVERTISING SWITCH

Curzon cinemas has appointed Digital Cinema Media [DCM] to take over its advertising from incumbents Pearl & Dean from 1 January. DCM already oversees 80% of the UK's cinema advertising market with **Cineworld**, **Vue** and **Odeon** amongst its clients.

Screen Daily – 15 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

SPANISH FLEA

An investigation from Spain's culture ministry has accused film producers and cinema owners of faking the number of tickets sold so that films could reach the audience targets needed for Spanish government subsidies. When a film hits the 30,000 viewer mark, around €400,000 is automatically released to the producers; this figure can rise to €1.5m if the number reaches 60,000 and other conditions are satisfied. An inspector said he was the only person in the cinema when it was recorded that 150 people had watched the film. The ministry has identified a further 32 films it regards as suspicious.

Daily Telegraph – date unknown; sent in by Carl Chesworth

GALA BINGO SOLD



Gala Bingo at the former **Gaumont** Worcester in May 2006

The Gala Coral group has sold its UK bingo club network for £241m. Equity investment firm Caledonia Investments plc is now the owner of Gala Bingo, Britain's biggest bingo club operator with 38% of the commercial bingo land-based market. At its peak Gala had 174 clubs but has been steadily disposing of its properties in recent years and now operates on 130 sites. The majority of these are modern flat-floor premises but twelve are so called 'heritage clubs' – mostly in former cinemas. The group sold its casinos in 2013 and last July agreed to merge its betting shop business with that of Ladbrokes. It says it will now concentrate on its on-line gambling operation.

Daily Telegraph – 26 October; [cityam.com] – 27 October; sent in by Keith Bye & Ray Dolling

PIZZA THE ACTION?

A pilot scheme to sell pizzas to cinema-goers was launched at the **Odeon** Trafford Centre in Manchester to coincide with the opening of the new *Star Wars* film on 17 December. If the pilot is successful, restaurant company Croma hopes to roll it out across the majority of **Odeon** cinemas. The pizzas are targeted at patrons going into the cinema but will also be available to shopping centre customers without having to buy a cinema ticket. Traditional square pizza boxes will be replaced with rectangular ones for pizzas that are about 11 inches long and 4½ inches wide. The lid comes off and slides under the box so it's more convenient for the cinema.

Late News: The **Odeon** website says that similar restaurants are already open at their cinemas in Tunbridge Wells, Edinburgh Lothian Road and Loughborough.

Manchester Evening News – 29 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

INDUSTRY HEALTH CHECK

Speaking at the UKCA conference on 17 November, Ian Shepherd, group commercial officer at **Odeon** cinemas, said that the industry's current health is not necessarily permanent and more needs to be done to sustain growth. "Customers, technology and the world have changed. It seems inconceivable that there might be no cinema in five years' time but a decade ago it seemed inconceivable that there might be no book or record shops in the UK. You go to see a \$100m film in a cinema that cost millions and no-one looks you in the eye and says hello." The executive also said that **Odeon** had seen a 13.8% increase in attendance and a 17.7% increase in revenue.

Screen Daily – 17 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth

FLOP

Momentum, a \$20m-budget thriller set in South Africa took just £46 from 10 sites in the UK, giving it a screen average of just £4.60 per cinema. It screened in regional locations, including Kidderminster, Hull and Morecambe and had a simultaneous digital release. Mark Kermode referred to it as "utter pants" in his one-star review and it only received a 27% rating on the *Rotten Tomatoes* website.

The Guardian – 24 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth

HOLIDAY SNAPS ERROR

On the back page of the most recent edition of the CTA Bulletin (Vol49 No6) under the heading "Some Cinemas in Ireland", I think there has been a mistake. I refer to the photo at the top of page 28: "Killorglan (Co Kerry) The former **Oisín** cinema in 2001". I believe the caption is incorrect. The photo shown is of a building in the town of Caherciveen in County Kerry. You can see it if you do a search on Google Street View for "Railway Street, Caherciveen, Ireland". There was a cinema called the **Oisín** in the town of Killorglin, Co. Kerry but it is not this building.

Jim Keenan



There are some Holiday Snaps of cinemas in Ireland on the back page of the last Bulletin. The one cited as the **Oisín** in Killorglin is in fact a former dance hall in the adjacent (and my local) town Cahersiveen; though it has the look, it never was a cinema. Above is a photo of the **Oisín** Killorglin, which was the last operating cinema on the Iveragh peninsula. It closed around the turn of the century. There was a cinema in Cahersiveen but it closed some 40 years ago. I may have a look to see if any sign of it remains, when I'm next in town.

Tim O'Sullivan

I would like to double-check with Maurice Brader concerning his *Holiday Snaps* picture of the **Oisín** cinema, Killorglin, Eire, in the last Bulletin. I visited this cinema in 1974 and my clear memory is of a façade that was flush with the adjacent buildings and not particularly resembling a cinema. In fact it almost certainly was previously a shop or a residence. One bought tickets at the front, then went out through the back door and down a garden path to a separate building at the far end, which was the cinema itself. The building pictured looks far more like a cinema than the one I saw. For those interested in the equipment, it had Super Simplex mechanisms, RCA sound and Peerless Magnarcs. The cinema was struggling at the time and the manager said, "We will keep going as long as we can." I'm not sure when it closed.

Charles Morris

Maurice Brader writes: The photo was taken in April/May 2001 on a day trip round the 'Ring of Kerry'. I think we stopped for a coffee break at a place called Cahersiveen. When taking the photo I was informed by a passer-by that the building had once been used as a cinema, I asked him if he could remember its name but he said he could not. So I think that I have got it wrong and that the correspondents above are right. I do hope you all will accept my apologies.

CURZON, CLEVEDON, NORTH SOMERSET.

The item on p13 of Bulletin 49/6 needs some comment. Whilst the new café/bar development may be advantageous the report does not mention that this has been achieved on the site of the former Curzon Collection of Cinema Technology, savagely desecrated in the process; however that is not the real reason for my comments.

The footnote by Alan Eyles is very appropriate. I do not understand why the claim of being the oldest cinema in the world is still being made. This claim first raised its head in 1996 when the, then, local group took over the **Curzon** as a Community cinema. How it originated I have never discovered even after serious research. The comment does appear in the preface to my book *The Everlasting Picture Show*, which is a history of the Curzon, published in 2005. At the time of writing such a claim was very much in place. That comment refers to the cinema site and not specifically to the cinema.

Motion pictures were shown regularly in Clevedon from November 1910. The first cinema, the *Picture House* opened on 20 April 1912. The present building construction was started in March 1920 and was completed by 1922. It was constructed over the original without an evening performance being lost; the changeover was completed over a weekend.

Thus it is on record that motion pictures have been shown continuously on the same site in Clevedon for over 103 years. Both cinemas have only ever closed for a few days for alterations in that time and never closed for other purposes such as bingo. I would say that that is some sort of a record.

I tried to discourage the **Curzon** Management from pursuing the claim some time ago, which I think they did, so it seems that the local newspaper has raked over past material. Further research firmly upholds Alan Eyles comment on this issue and it should now be laid to rest.

Maurice Thornton

GALWAY CINEMAS

In Letters (p25 Bulletin 49/6) Mr. David J Gammage enquired about cinemas in Galway (Republic of Ireland) since the early 30s. From 1912 films were shown in the **Town Hall Cinema**, "Galway's Cosiest Cinema", which closed in 1993. The **New Galway Cinema** was beside the GPO with an entrance from William Street. The cinema was known later as the **Gaiety** and later still as the **Empire** (seating accommodating 1,050). In 1937 it was changed back to a skating rink.

The **Savoy** (aka the **Corrib Cinema**) in Eglinton Street, was opened on Christmas Eve 1934 with a concert by John McCormack, world famous tenor. The first film was *Flying Down to Rio* in front of a full house of 1,239 people. The **Savoy** closed in 1976.

The **Estonia** (Galway's luxury cinema) opened in November 1939 (776 seats). The première of *The Quiet Man* was shown here as the film was made in and around nearby Cong. During the war years sprockets from one of the projectors broke leaving only one projector functioning. Rather than change the reel every twenty minutes, then manager Frank Rafter had a special wooden reel made, which allowed him to run the entire film without interruption. The cinema became the **Claddagh Palace** in 1975 and closed in 1995. As a matter of interest check Galway City Museum Exhibitions; Cinema: Galway Goes to the Pictures.

James Creamer

PREMIUM PRICING

Odeon's decision to charge 'premium pricing' for so-called blockbusters has created many comments – including some in our very own Bulletin. For any CTA members wanting to see the latest not-very-big release at their local **Odeon** I suggest you check your ticket price – you may be paying extra for a film that's clearly not a 'blockbuster'.

This happened to my wife and me on the last weekend in November when we visited the **Odeon** Bournemouth... but let me start at the beginning. We left our home in Portsmouth early that morning and drove fifty miles to see our grandkids, aged eight and five, in Poole. They wanted to see *The Good Dinosaur*, which had opened nationwide the previous day. We could have taken them to the **Odeon** Bournemouth, just four miles distant but with the 'premium pricing' policy, even a family ticket would have cost us £30. So instead we drove as usual the twenty miles to Dorchester, where we saw the film at the recently refurbished **Plaza**, part of the independent Picturedrome Electric Theatre Company run by Adam Cunard. We paid £14 (yes, £14) for four tickets, sitting in plush leather chairs complete with cupholders, watching an entertaining flick digitally pre-

sented with superb picture quality and great sound. Even with refreshments the visit only cost us £25!

Later that evening after dropping the grandkids home, we drove into Bournemouth to see the Johnny Depp flick *Black Mass* at the six-screen **Odeon**, formerly the **Gaumont**. Because this cinema, along with the lovely **ABC** just a few hundred yards away in Westover Road, will close next year when **Odeon** open their new multiplex in the town, we're trying to see as many films as we can in these two old cinemas before they shut. As the **Odeon** was already charging an extra £1.50 a ticket for *Spectre* and an additional £1 a ticket for *Hunger Games* and *The Good Dinosaur*, I didn't expect to pay extra for *Black Mass* – particularly as it was showing in their second smallest screen. But a 50p surcharge was added to the ticket (which we were not informed about when we purchased), bringing the price for two tickets to £17.90. When I queried this with a member of staff who was wearing a uniform that looked like he had slept in it, he replied: "Major releases require more staff and that's costly!" I then pointed out that if **Odeon** considered *Black Mass* to be a major release why was it in a screen with just 124 seats? The member of staff shrugged his shoulders and added: "We don't make much money on tickets so we need to charge more for big films."

I suppose we should have demanded to speak to the manager at this point but, to be honest, we wanted to see the film, we like the faded charms of this brutally subdivided art deco picture palace and why ruin an evening for the sake of a pound? And the film was excellent although as we were joined by no more than thirty other patrons, it was not the so-called blockbuster **Odeon** were rather desperately claiming. Interestingly, having paid a higher price for a better service (apparently), there were no toilet rolls in the Ladies, the Gents had a cubicle out of order, only one half-hearted screen check was made and the few staff on duty were too busy chatting about their social life to even point you in the direction of screen ②! The seats, sound and picture quality were okay but the contrast between the **Odeon** Bournemouth, part of a big corporate-run cinema chain and the **Plaza** Dorchester, a small, independently run cinema, could not be more clear. The **Plaza**, despite charging far less, was, in our opinion, superior in every aspect.

So, would we return to the **Odeon** Bournemouth? Yes, we would. Why? Because we like watching our movies in traditional high-street cinemas, especially when they sadly have a closing date. But would we recommend **Odeon** as a company that offers good value? I'm afraid we wouldn't – and we both worked in the cinema industry for twenty years, many of them with **Odeon** so we know what constitutes good cinema service. As I've already said, an extra pound might not be a lot of money but it's the principle that matters. So check the price of your ticket the next time you visit your local **Odeon** – you might be paying more than you expect.

Mike and Janice Whitcombe

'PROPER' CINEMAS

I hope that you can keep us informed about the progress of the cinema project at Durham [Beamish Museum – see p18 Bulletin 49/5] because the rebuilding of the Chip Shop at the same location documentary shown on TV was fabulous.

While mentioning rebuilding of cinemas and following on past reports in the Bulletin, the **Savoy** Heaton Moor, Stockport is up and running. What a fabulous job it is. Although a few finishing touches are needed it is a wonderful project. Technically this is not a rebuild but to call it a refurbishment would be an understatement. I cannot quite believe that I have lived to see such work carried out. It shames the Multiplex and the image and the sound are just as good. I kept telling everybody who cared to listen that this is how cinemas used to be, then I thought no it's not, it's better than they used to be! A couch for two. Heaven! Being shown to our seats by an enthusiastic usher. Heaven! A great reception area with a bar. Heaven! Luxury seats. Heaven! Membership discounts. Heaven! Monthly 'What's on' programmes. Heaven! In fact this is how cinemas in Heaven may be! Or am I already there and you may not be getting this letter? It is a long time since my wife and I were on double seats and of course we had double seats in 'The Good Old Days' but not couches and certainly not with a glass of wine! Long live the **Savoy** and every other 'Proper Cinema'.

Terry Rourke

ODEON YEovil, SMALL AUDITORIA & ALCOHOLIC CINEMAS

I was interested to read Ron Knee's letter about the former **Odeon** Yeovil in the last Bulletin. The trough lighting on the side walls in the circle / screen ① was not original though; it dates from a refit in 1990 after the roof had blown off the cinema during the severe weather at the time. As insurance paid out for the damage, the job was done to a high standard. The auditorium walls were completely stripped back to remove asbestos and a lighting trough was built, curving down to meet the stage on the two side walls with red fire-glow bulbs, to mimic the original design. The new suspended ceiling was also curved down to the stage, rather than just a flat slab. The dimmers were housed in a second-floor room in the left hand splay wall of the original stage; these are now housed in the Newport cinema museum.

The original trough lighting did make a reappearance for the 1992 film *Dracula*. We had made a slide up of one of the gargoyles from the poster to be projected onto the tabs between shows but the red footlights overwhelmed the image [R]. Four of the lighting troughs were pulled out from behind the screen, where they had been dumped, re-wired and fitted with fire-glow lamps. Two were put to the left and to the right of the stage and wired into the side wall lights. This then lit the sides of the tabs leaving the gargoyle image projected in the centre. It was indeed a lovely cinema to watch a film in.

Onto the recent comments on small auditoria. When done right with good sight lines and a screen that's in proportion to the room, a small auditorium can give an excellent viewing experience. Unfortunately, there seems to be a trend to try and put screens in without much thought to this. Coupled with the cutting back on any of the extras and frills that made going to the cinema different to watching TV at home and you lose what made the whole experience.



In a tie-in with the recently published *Pictures to Pints* book: I was on a night out in Bristol last month. On going into the Wetherspoons **St George's Hall** in Redfield I quickly clocked that it was an old cinema. The cinema opened in 1912, passing to **Granada** in 1935 and closing in 1961 for a Granada Social Club. It became a Wetherspoons in December 1998. Inquiries with the manager revealed that the upper parts of the building were largely untouched. As the rest of our group tucked into a rather fine supper, the manager kindly took the time out to show me around. Going up one of the original exit stairs, he opened doors revealing the balcony intact, complete with seats [above]. There is a new wall at the front of the balcony into what is now a storeroom over the stalls. Much of the original plasterwork is still there. The projection room has been bricked up but there were two old arc lamps from the projectors in a tiny space at the rear of the circle. If you're in the area, the pub (the bulk of which is located in the original foyer) is a very pleasant place to pass a couple of hours.

Ben Doman

MAGNA WIGSTON

Further to the letter on p25 of the last bulletin, the **Magna** at Wigston [Leicester] certainly did advertise in the local press – this advert is from the *Leicester Mercury* dated 26 September 1985. It closed in early 1986 with *Rocky IV*. {33782}

Hugh Sykes

Cinemas

MAGNA (WIGSTON)
Large Car Park

ALL THIS WEEK
SYLVESTER STALLONE in
RAMBO
FIRST BLOOD PART II
(15) 7.40 only. Support prog. 7.30
Note: Sunday once only from 6.15

CLASSIC MISTAKE

Just one small comment, in the PictureHouse visit announcement on p3 of the last Bulletin, reference was made to this complex being the first multiplex in the West End. I believe that my five-screen **Classic** complex at the Tottenham Court Road end of Oxford Street was the first, since it was open around 1975/6

Dr Laurie Marsh, Past Chairman of Classic Cinemas

EALING CORRECTION

Many thanks for another fascinating issue of the Bulletin (November/December). May I take this opportunity of letting you have a small correction in relation to the London (Ealing) story? It suggested that the new operator for the eight-screen cinema was not yet known. In fact, it has been known for some time that it will be **Picturehouse** cinemas that will be providing the screens as part of a wider residential/retail development on the site. By way of an update, the time during which **Empire** Cinemas could have appealed against the result of the CPO hearing has now lapsed and it is understood that they are actively negotiating the sale of their property to the developers, Land Securities. If this proceeds quickly, work should start on site in 2016 but the new cinema is unlikely to be open before much before the end of 2018. We hope that it will be possible to re-install light fittings salvaged from the old **Forum** Cinema [R] into part of the cinema complex as a small reminder of a building that was sadly demolished in its 75th year.



Robert Gurd; also sent in by Mike Collins & Simon Walker

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

On BBC1 Monday 9 November at 7:30pm in the programme *On Stage* Miriam Margolyes told the fight for survival of the two theatres in Portsmouth – the **Theatre Royal** and the **Kings**. The **Theatre Royal** has recently re-opened after a massive reconstruction. The **Kings** is undergoing a facelift. The manager said that it is a chancy business as some shows are not as successful as others. The theatre narrowly escaped demolition in 1980.

I recently saw the film *Suffragette* at the local **Cineworld**. Quite a good film and worth seeing. After the interminable end credits. I noticed that the copyright is held by three parties. This must cause some legal problems in the future if one of the parties goes out of business. There have always been some films that run into legal problems – do I remember *Life with Father* with William Powell running into legal problems some years ago? Having three parties involved seems to be inviting problems.

The *Daily Echo* on Wednesday 4 November provided an interesting article about the former **Gaiety** cinema in Southampton. Apparently the cinema had an area that could be cordoned off for courting couples! I am not sure if this would be allowed today. However the local in Eastleigh has bean bags right up against the screen, where patrons can lie down and watch the screen. This seems strange as a person would have a terrible view of the screen but there are also Health and Safety issues as it could affect a person's eyesight. It would be interesting to find if other members have used these bean bags.

Ian Patterson

MORAY PLAYHOUSE

Further to the newsreel entry on p15 the last Bulletin about a third screen at the **Moray Playhouse** in Elgin, this was news to us too! I have found a building warrant online: "15/00446/ALT – Create first-floor seated screening area within existing circulation concourse and service counter" which answers some of the mystery, although it must be a pretty small screen as I don't recall them having that much circulation space upstairs! {26391}

Gordon Barr, CTA Scotland

PRIDE OF PLACE

Cinemas don't often appear on the cover of music CDs but the Hamersmith **Odeon**, along with lead singer Freddie Mercury, does just that on *Queen – A Night At The Odeon*, recorded live at the Hamersmith **Odeon** on 24 December 1975. It's available to buy now on CD, DVD, SD Blu-Ray, 2-LP vinyl and a Super Deluxe Box Set!

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe

PEARL & DEAN MUSIC

Leonard Trebilco (1924-2005) wrote most of his music under the pseudonym Trevor Duncan. He was working as a BBC sound engineer when one of his compositions *High Heels* caused a stir in the music world. Eventually he gave up his 'day job' at the BBC to concentrate on composition. *The Girl from Corsica* and *March from a Little Suite* (used as the theme for BBC's *Doctor Finlay's Casebook*) were two more of his hits. *Grand Vista* will be familiar to cinema-goers as the **Pearl & Dean** introductory music in the 1950s. These tracks and more are on a Guild CD *The Golden Age of Light Music, The Hall of Fame – Volume 2* GLCD 5124. It's available from Presto Classical [www.prestoclassical.co.uk] 7 Park Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 4QN for £8.75 + £1.50 p&p or Amazon [tinyurl.com/oftl6oe].

Carl Chesworth – with thanks to CTA member Christopher Ingram

THE CHEAPEST SEATS IN TOWN?

I was fascinated by Charles Morris's article on the **Tolmer** (*Picture House* 40). Apparently this converted church cinema, on the outskirts of the West End, offered a varied offering of films at the cheapest prices in town. Unfortunately these bargain seats attracted tramps and unsociables, who relieved themselves where they sat, making he stalls a no-go area for the more discerning public, who were then obliged to use the balcony – at slightly higher prices. Ignoring the drab and squalid surroundings, the programme was perfect for the serious film buff. In fact Mike Leigh, one of our most notable film directors, named the **Tolmer** as one of his favourite cinemas (*Independent on Sunday* 17 April 1994 – as quoted in *Picture House*). The **Tolmer** closed way back in 1972. So who can claim the cheapest seats in the West End now?

I took a trip into Town recently to see the Christmas decorations and catch up on some last minute shopping. Whilst there I decided to take in a visit to the newly re-opened **Regent Street Cinema**. What a delightful surprise that was! I booked on-line couple of days previously and presented myself at the box office to collect my ticket. The staff were smartly dressed in black uniform and directed me to the bar for a complimentary 'posh' coffee. Finishing my drink in the very comfortable bar I made my way to the auditorium. This was originally a lecture hall of the Regent Street Polytechnic (now University of Westminster) where, as I'm sure all readers know, moving pictures were first screened in Britain. It has been through many revamps in its long history but is mostly 1928 design. In fact I understand the CTA were involved in planning the latest £6m facelift – and what a fantastic job they've made of it. It is now a stadium-style auditorium rather than the original stalls and balcony design. A small, two manual, six rank Compton Organ was set on stage and we were treated to a twenty-minute interlude of Christmas music – complete with guest singer. Before the film was shown, *Meet Me in St Louis*, the University Community Involvement officer welcomed us and talked about the film. For purists the film was a 35mm print so we enjoyed the odd crackle and pop of the optical soundtrack plus a few small scratches. Some would say authenticity added to our enjoyment. After the screening we were treated to complimentary mulled wine and mince pies.

The University is well known for its media courses, Alan Yentob (creative director at the BBC) being a past student. The cinema has a very wide offering of film to the public. It is also used for its own students to present their course material in top-class surroundings. Where the **Tolmer** left off the **Regent Street Cinema** can certainly take its place. On 24 February the CTA have organised a visit to this cinema (as well as the **Empire** – see p3) so members will have an opportunity to savour this beautiful building for themselves. Oh, the price for such indulgence? Just £1.75 (plus £1 booking fee). Now that's what I call a bargain.

Peter Towell

LORD'S PRAYER BAN

Following up the Daily Mail headline *Hypocrisy of the Cinemas* the ban by Digital Cinema Media on showing the Lord's Prayer, I was puzzled to find that their website gallery of their 'partner' cinema chains shows seven **Odeon** and **Vue** photos captioned 'Unknown' [www.dcm.co.uk]. This seems very unprofessional. The photos are excellent; do they need a CTA member to help them identify each photo? There is also an interactive map showing where all their 435 client cinemas are around the UK. See also p19.

Martin Tapsell

STEAM TRAIN OBSERVATIONS



I had a steam train trip to Bath in November. I saw the former **Forum** cinema, still going strong as a Church. They host one-night shows and also have a café in what was a shop in the front. The former Gala Bingo hall [ex **Palace Theatre**, pictured above in August 2003] opposite the **Theatre Royal** is about to hit the dust; all the outbuildings around it have been knocked down. It looks like they will be keeping the façade, according to pictures on hoardings around the site. They will have to be very careful when they knock it down as the stage end is attached to the rear end of the **Komedia** [ex **ABC Beau Nash**]. On the way to Paddington to catch the train, the 27 bus passed the **Odeon** Kensington. From what I could see, part of the stage end has been knocked down – another month and the cinema might be a memory, apart from the façade. Pictures and writings on hoardings say “New cinema coming soon for the community.” What a waste!

Malcolm Gambles

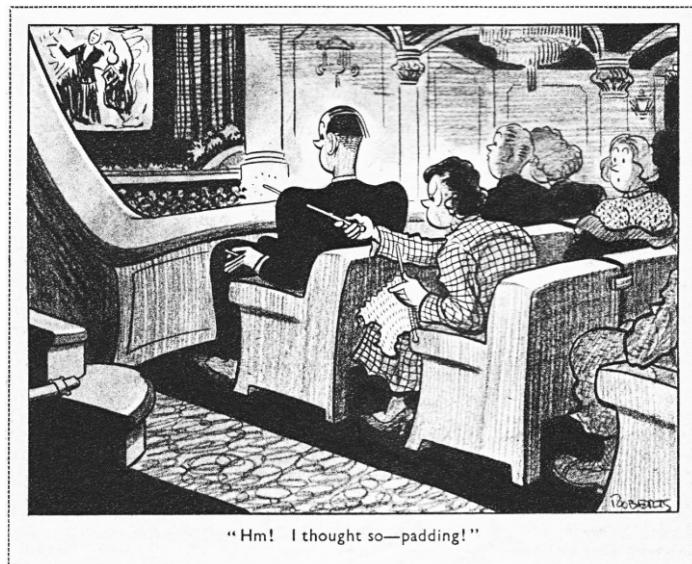
MERSEYSIDE CINEMAS

Reading through the latest edition of the Bulletin, I came across the mention of the **Empire** Cinema, Garston, Liverpool; I live ten minutes from it. This cinema celebrated 100 years in June 2015. There are some nice interior shots in the new book *After the Pictures* by Keith Rose. This book features all the Liverpool cinemas.

Next year the **Argyle Theatre** Birkenhead (no longer with us) would have celebrated 150 years. The first film show on the Wirral was at this theatre in 1896. It was Chards Vitagraph. The theatre was bombed during the Merseyside blitz in May 1940. After the war, the remains were demolished. However, in the old basement area, a film projector was found and placed in the Wirral Borough Council's collections. It was a Kinemacolor machine and is now being looked after by the Projected Picture Trust.

Mike Taylor, PPT North

CARTOON CORNER



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

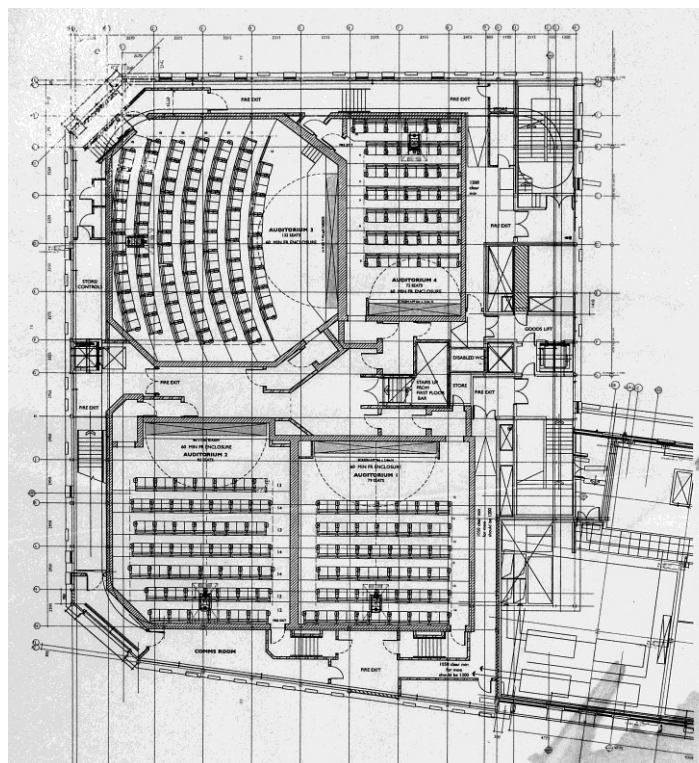
1910 FAÇADES



With the imminent demolition of the **Futurist** Liverpool being in sight and it always being referred to as Liverpool's oldest purpose-built cinema, I thought members should be aware of the unique position the **Kensington Picturedrome** [pictured above in July 2007 as a Wetherspoons] has in the UK – and not just in Liverpool, especially given its original 1910 façade. It is believed to be one of only four 1910 façades left in the UK. The others are: The **Piccadilly Arcade** Birmingham, The **Duke of York's** Brighton and the **Electric Palace** Portobello Road. Can anybody add any more? See Newsreel p23. [34634]

Philip Mayer

NEW EVERYMAN CINEMA IN HARROGATE



I was in the town centre just before Christmas and I noticed that construction of the new **Everyman** cinema is well advanced; it is scheduled to open later this year. I found interior floor plans posted on the hoardings outside; here is the second floor plan. Sorry for the poor quality but they were behind plastic. It shows four screens with capacities of 132, 92, 79 & 60. The fifth screen, seating 46, is on the first floor with the foyer and concession stand. The ground floor entrance is on a corner with shops down both sides. Note that the projectors appear to be in the ceilings of the auditoria. The site is only 300 yards from the current five-screen **Odeon**.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

80 years



Globe (ABC) 101 High Street, Stockton-On-Tees. Opened January 1936. Architect Percy Lindsay Browne & Son. Listed Grade II. Does anyone know the exact date this cinema opened?



Palace High Street, Conwy. Opened 6 January 1936. Architect Sydney Colwyn Foulkes. Listed Grade II. Above [L].



Vogue (Odeon) Main Street, Rutherglen, Glasgow. Opened 29 January 1936. Architect James McKissack. Listed Category B. Above [R].

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [tinyurl.com/npkozya] A Facebook album from the *Lancaster Past and Present* page of photos of the conversion and ultimate demise of the **Odeon/Regal** cinema Lancaster. {6538}
- ★ [www.londonssilentcinemas.com] documents the early lives of over 700 cinemas in London and the suburbs. Includes interactive maps of the area and the West End. *Sent in by Mike Wood*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/j7xygt] A photo gallery on the *Hinckley Times* website taken inside the former **Danilo/Essoldo/Classic** in 2011.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/hl8fopn] *Men's Journal* [USA] list of top 20 movie theatres worldwide. Some nice photos. *Sent in by Nick Taylor*
- ★ [www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-34733308] A BBC article on the films banned by local Councils. *Sent in by Richard Jones*
- ★ [www.28dayslater.co.uk/theatres-and-cinemas.f78] The urban explorers have been to more cinemas, including the **Ritz** Grays, the **Carlton** Hull, the **Kingsway** Birmingham, the **Danilo** Brierley Hill & the **Futurist** Scarborough. *Sent in by David Alexander*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/o8ftkzj] A *Newcastle Chronicle* gallery of photos inside the former **Empire** in Crook (Durham). Last used as a motor accessories shop, campaigners are trying to reopen it as a cinema. See p20 Bulletin 49/3. {43148} *Sent in by Frank Manders*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/og5o6tt] A page from *Wales Online* with photos of former cinemas in Cardiff. *Sent in by Carl Chesworth*

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

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

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].

NECROLOGY

We have been notified recently of the passing of several actors:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Warren Mitchell (89) | Alf Garnett in <i>Till Death Us Do Part</i> |
| Peter Baldwin (82) | Derek Wilton in <i>Coronation Street</i> |
| Nicholas Smith (81) | Mr Rumbold in <i>Are You Being Served</i> |
| Colin Welland (81) | starred in <i>Kes</i> and <i>Z-Cars</i> and wrote the screenplay for <i>Chariots of Fire</i> |
| Maureen O'Hara (95) | starred in <i>Jamaica Inn</i> and <i>The Quiet Man</i> |
| Richard Davies (89) | starred in <i>Zulu</i> and TV's <i>Please Sir!</i> |
| Anthony Valentine (76) | TV star of <i>Colditz</i> and <i>Raffles</i> |
| Dean Jones (84) | starred in Disney's <i>The Love Bug</i> |
| Saeed Jaffrey (86) | starred in <i>My Beautiful Laundrette</i> |

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

Listed in the order in which they joined, we are pleased to welcome to membership of the CTA: David Pearce, Martin Jarvis and Peter Breach.

DONATIONS

Most grateful and sincere thanks are given to the following members who have included a donation when renewing their annual CTA subscriptions: PJ Adams, JCS Altman, RS Anderson, M Armstrong, DC Bishop, EG Bottle, BF Collins, IC Cooper, N Corbett, R Duerden, KS Ebsworth, L Essex, DW Faircloth, H Fisher, DJ Gardiner, WG Gilbert, RJ Gillings, PJ Goff, VF Harvey, HJ Hill, GE Hooper, AF Hughes, J Kennett, S Kielty, P King, B Lamport, MJ Mantell, AI Mantell, AJ Marston, P Nevitsky, AJ Peel, JM Pritchard, D Prosser, DM Riches, MJ Roberts, FRA Rosen, JG Rumble, C Sanders, RJR Shaw, JD Simmonds, RD Simpson, SD Simpson, R Smirk, DG Towers, KM Wakefield, WE Waters, JWH White, AG Williams and RW Woodin.

IN MEMORIAM

We are sorry once again to have to report the deaths of CTA members. Geoffrey Smith-Wyatt, who died in October, joined the CTA in 1998. Richard Partington of Goole died on 25 November at the age of 72. He became a member of the CTA in 2010. David F Willis of Cliftonville was diagnosed with cancer about two years ago and passed away on 31 December at the age of 65. David joined CTA in 1978. We send sincere condolences to all of their families and friends.

MEMBERSHIP TOTAL

The end of 2015 sees that the total of fully paid-up members has fallen by 52 since the end of 2014 and now stands at 1074. Sadly, in that period, 20 members have passed away and 11 have resigned for various reasons. Offset by 41 new members joining, a total of 62 members have just failed to renew without giving any reason!

Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary

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or paperback, let us
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OBITUARIES

GEOFFREY SMITH-WYATT

Geoffrey Smith-Wyatt, an early minute-taker for our Casework Committee, died on 18 October at the age of 82. He took over in 1998 from Adam Unger and continued in the rôle until 2003 when Ron Knee became the minutes' secretary. Geoff had shorthand ability and was therefore extremely adept at transcribing our ruminations on cinema buildings. He was also quick and efficient at producing the minutes, returning home after the meetings to start writing straight away while everything was still fresh in his mind. Geoff had no previous involvement in cinemas, conservation or architecture but was an Art Deco enthusiast, his flat in West London being an elegant example of the style. He attended one of our foreign tours, to Madrid in 1989 and as a member of our sister organisation, The Twentieth Century Society, travelled with them to Budapest.

I met Geoff not in the CTA but socially and we became friends through a shared interest in the architecture of the last Century; he was extremely kind in offering to type out from my longhand the initial chapters of the first edition of my book *Cinemas in Britain*. Geoff was much travelled, in the past working in the Middle East and in Turkey, where he taught English. He loved opera, being a great admirer of Maria Callas. Highly convivial, he enjoyed nothing so much as being surrounded by friends in his flat or in a favourite local Turkish restaurant.

Richard Gray

HLIA DOUGLAS



Hlia and Peter Douglas joined the CTA in 2000 after Peter's retirement. They came on a few trips together but sadly, Peter became ill and died before many of us really got to know him. Six months after his death, Hlia got in touch to ask if she could join the trip going from Boston to Buffalo because "life had to go on".

And so Hlia became a regular on CTA trips, often revisiting places she had known in earlier travels and usually returning with more luggage than she started with! All of her fellow travellers will have stories to tell: a birthday celebrated in Australia, getting dust out of your hair in Cuba and how she was still using the cutlery that was given out to those who attended the movies during the depression years.

The picture [above] was taken in the Gloria Palast, Munich. While the rest of us cracked bad J Arthur Rank jokes, the temptation was just too much for the smallest among us. We were in an enclosed space and the noise was VERY LOUD – but so were the cheers and applause that followed. I'm sorry the picture is not quite pin-sharp (Hlia just got on and did it and you had to be damn quick to catch the moment) but I'm so glad I didn't miss the shot.

Rachel Woodforde

