



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

Vol 50 No 2

March / April 2016



The interior of the London Palladium – see Visits p3 and article p18; *photo courtesy Ian Grundy*



The Cineworld [ex Regal] Hammersmith (London) which is to close in mid-April for probable demolition – see Newsreel p27; *photo taken April 2006*

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Thank you for everything you have sent in. There has been so much again this time that I have had to hold over a couple of things. I will publish them as soon as I have space, I am also running out of holiday snaps so, if you are going anywhere exciting, please click away.

Sorry to be a nuisance but please remember to check the postage on anything you send me; otherwise I have to go to the sorting office and pay the excess. There is another postage rise due but the main problem seems to be sending large letters with just an ordinary stamp. If it bigger than A5 [half the size of this Bulletin] it needs to be stamped at large letter rates. If in doubt, please take it to a post office. See you at the AGM.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

HOLIDAY SNAPS



FINLAND

The Bio cinema is in Ekenas, southern Finland. Ekenas is a small seaside town with lots of traditional wooden houses. It's a very beautiful place. The cinema itself about 100 years old and still in use! [Above]

SOMEWHERE AT SEA

Helen Mirren on the outdoor cinema screen aboard the P&O cruise ship Azura in the Caribbean. [Right]

Both photos by Laurence Geary

CALIFORNIA

We went to Monterey on our tour of California and found the Osio Cinema in the old Spanish area. Although it is not an old cinema, it was constructed in 1999 in the old Spanish style. It consists of six theatres, 30 apartments and a café called Café Noir, where we had an early morning breakfast. The cinema does show cult films and unusual films to the public, not just mainstream films, which makes it interesting as you can see from the photo of the films on show at the time we were there.

Barry Sinclair



CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(founded 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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BULLETIN: Members are invited to submit items for possible publication to the Bulletin Editor. However, it is stressed that the publication of an item does not necessarily imply that it reflects the views of the Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor.

It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise; items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor.

Please enclose SAE and state if you require items to be returned, otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.

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

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

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
WEDNESDAY 20 APRIL

VISITS AND EVENTS

Cinema Theatre Association Annual General Meeting 2016

Saturday 7 May at 11:00



The 2016 AGM will be held at the Odyssey Cinema in St Albans, Hertfordshire [above]. 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. The subdivisions inserted by Odeon in 1973 and 1988 have been removed and the cinema is now a single-screen operation with 500 seats.

We shall be having a break for lunch from 1pm and then head for our afternoon visit to the St Albans Organ Theatre at 3:15pm, finishing at about 5pm.

The cost for the Organ Theatre visit is £5 per person. If you would like to come along please send a cheque made payable to the Cinema Theatre Association to Ray Ritmeester, 66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB. Please include email or contact number.

Getting there: The Odyssey Cinema is situated at 166 London Road, St Albans, AL1 1PQ. From St Albans City station it is approximately a 10 minute walk via Alma Road. [odysseypictures.co.uk].

Nominations for committee members are invited and should be sent to the Secretary, Adam Unger (address on p2) to arrive seven days before the meeting.

Thursday Morning at the London Palladium

Thursday 21 April at 11:30am;

Organised by Adam Unger

An exclusive tour for the CTA of the world famous London Palladium in Argyll Street, London W1. Built for Walter Gibbons and designed by renowned theatre architect, Frank Matcham as a palatial variety theatre, seating 2,298 on several levels, in a style described as 'French Rococo' – it incorporates the façade of the earlier Corinthian Bazaar on that site.

The Palladium opened on 26 December 1910 with a variety programme, which included music hall star Nellie Wallace. Since then, the Palladium has become the home of musicals and variety, with all the biggest name stars appearing there and of course the legendary Tiller Girls. With the launch of commercial television in the mid 1950s, Val Parnell's *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* became a weekly fixture of live variety transmitted into millions of homes. The Palladium is currently owned by the Really Useful Theatres Group. See article on p18 and photo on front cover.

THE TOUR is scheduled to last about two hours and will cover the front of house areas, auditorium and understage. Mark Fox, the Advertising Manager for the Really Useful Theatres Group, will lead the tour. Please be warned that there are lots of stairs and standing involved during the tour.

To apply: As there is a limit on numbers, the tour is restricted to members only. The cost is £12, with cheques payable to the Cinema Theatre Association, enclosing SAE and should be sent to: Adam Unger, 59 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, TW11 0DJ. The closing date for applications is 14 April.

Flicker Alley - Cinema in WWI

Guided Walks – Organised by Richard Norman;

Saturday 4 and Tuesday 7 June at 10:30am

When war erupted in Europe in 1914 London was the centre of the world's cinema business. There was an explosion too in the popularity of picture houses, with most films previewed and distributed from just a few streets around the Leicester Square area. Our mission is to see where these businesses and cinemas operated from and reflect on the attitudes and changing tastes of Londoners through film during five long years of war 100 years ago.



Leicester Square became the centre of entertainment.
tinted postcard, c1904

The walk is conducted for the CTA by qualified tour guide Chris Everett. Members will be guided through Cecil Court, adopted as the centre by the early film pioneers ('Flicker Alley') and Leicester Square and, as the film industry expanded, we will move on to see how it migrated to parts of Soho including Wardour Street, Gerrard Street and Soho Square, pointing out the relevant buildings with their background history.

The tour lasts approximately two hours, ending in Soho Square. After the walk finishes, members may optionally meet for lunch and refreshments (own expense) and to socialise at the nearby Wetherspoon's *Montagu Pyke* (formerly the 1911 Pyke's Cinematograph Cambridge Circus, latterly the Marquee Club), 105-107 Charing Cross Road.

This walk has been arranged for members on alternative dates to give flexibility to suit personal arrangements. Meeting at the Edith Cavell statue, opposite the National Portrait Gallery in Charing Cross Road.

To reserve a place: please send a cheque for £10 per person (payable to 'Cinema Theatre Association'), clearly stating which date you prefer. Each walk is limited to twenty persons and tickets are offered on a first come, first served basis.

Closing date for receipt of applications: 20 May.

Applications with cheque and SAE should be sent to:

Richard Norman, 4 Oakhill Lodge, Reedham Drive, Purley, CR8 4DT.
Email: [RichardNormanCTA@aol.com] for further information.

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.

Theatres and cinemas in Bologna and the nearby cities of Mantua, Parma and Ferrara 19-25 September – Organised by Richard Gray



The Teatro Bibiena Mantua
photo by asbruff (Creative Commons Licence)

Bologna is a historic and lively major City in northern Italy. In the well-preserved City-centre is the Piazza Maggiore surrounded by cafés and restaurants, while adjacent streets have colonnades built as shade in the summer and shelter in the winter. Most famous are the medieval towers built by feuding medieval families, the best known of which is the Asinelli Tower, open to visitors.

Bologna is also the location of important historic theatres and various 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); the Teatro Comunale of 1763 with 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 stepped seating and a perspective set; the early 17th Century Teatro Farnese in Parma – one of the first to have moveable scenery and the beautiful Baroque Teatro Bibiena of 1769 in Mantua [above] designed by Antonio Galli Bibiena and where the 13-year-old Mozart performed. We will also include the magnificent but little-known (in Britain) spa town of Salsomaggiore Terme with its lavish 19th Century buildings, including a theatre-concert venue, along with further theatres in Bologna, Reggio nell'Emilia, Mantua and Ferrara and an optional visit to the Palazzo del Té and Palazzo della Ragione in Mantua.

The tour has been arranged for us by Travel Editions. The flight will be the 15:00 British Airways to Bologna from London Heathrow on Monday 19 September (arriving at 18:10) where a coach will transfer us to the 4★ Zanol Hotel Tre Vecchi for six nights. This is centrally located, convenient for restaurants and cafés. We return on 25 September at 12:35, arriving into Heathrow at 14:00. There is an opt-out facility for those who would prefer to make their own way to Bologna, with a £200 tour price reduction. The tour will cost £1,225 per person (based on room sharing) to include flights, airport transfer, six nights bed and breakfast accommodation, a group dinner with wine and coffee on the second evening (on other evenings members make their own dinner arrangements and lunches as well) coaching in Bologna and to surrounding cities, theatre entrance/facility charges, the continuous use of an English/Italian speaking courier, specialised theatre guides where necessary and tour notes on the theatres and cinemas to be visited. There is a single room occupancy charge of £185.00. Information can also be found on: [www.traveleditions.co.uk/tour/Bologna-CTA] or by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to: Richard Gray, 45 Arnold Road, London E3 4NU.

Help Wanted

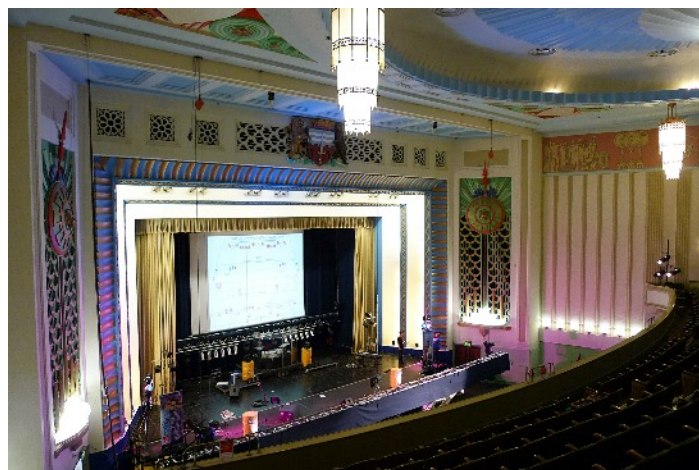
The CTA events committee would love to hear from members of any ideas for visits or events they may have. We can offer support and guidance for anyone who would like to organise a visit or event.

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].

Coming Soon

A Day in the City of Bath

Monday 8 August – Organised by Mike Wood



Since our last visit to the beautiful World Heritage City of Bath, only the exterior remains of the Palace but the listed Forum has been sympathetically restored [above]; the old Odeon has gone but a new one has taken its place; the historic listed Theatre Royal has had a major restoration and has taken over the Gemini/Robins, reconstructed as the Egg; the Beau Nash has reopened as the Komedia and is now showing film again in partnership with the nearby Little, also listed. We plan a day to visit most of these venues on a walking tour, so make a note on your calendar and look for more details in the next issue of the Bulletin.

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 25 March	Whistle Down the Wind (1961) [PG]
Friday 22 April	Big Trouble in Little China (1986) [15]
Saturday 23 April	Organ Coffee Morning 10am <u>admission free</u>
Friday 29 April	Flash Gordon (1980) [PG]
Friday 6 May	Brooklyn (2015) [12A]

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

Behind the Scenes tours at 11am on Mondays 28 March, 25 April & 23 May. £6 – book or simply turn up.

Coming Soon: Friday 1 July 7:30pm *Shooting Stars* (1928 silent) [PG] (BFI Restoration print). A fascinating drama set behind the scenes at a contemporary film studio. The Organist for this event is Michael Holmes.

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

COS MUSIC & PICTURE EVENINGS [www.cinema-organs.org.uk]

Friday 8 April Bernard Tilley

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

The Cinema Museum Bookstall will be open from 14:00 to 17:00 on Saturday 9 April. Admission Free. [www.cinemamuseum.org.uk] 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].

19 March	The latest James Bond – <i>Spectre</i> (2015) [12A]
2 April	<i>How to Murder your Wife</i> (1965) [PG]
30 April	<i>The Lady in the Van</i> (2015) [12A]

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

PUBLICATIONS

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.

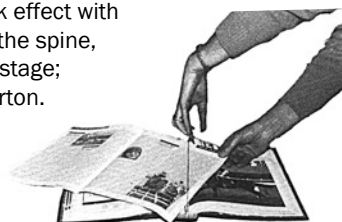
PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

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; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; Palace Conwy; Carlton Haymarket; Military Cinemas; 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?

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



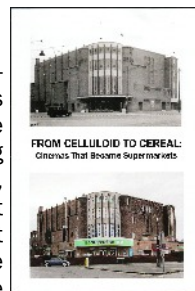
New Publication

From Celluloid to Cereal

Cinemas That Became Supermarkets

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

Following his successful publication about cinemas that became pubs (see below), Gavin has now turned his attention to cinemas that have become supermarkets. There are a surprising number of these – over 65 are described here, nearly all illustrated, in all parts of the UK. Whilst many of the exteriors are striking, we suspect that the interiors have not survived as well as if these buildings had become pubs, when the ornate interiors are often preserved and visible. With supermarkets, false ceilings tend to be the rule! The author is to be congratulated once again on the extensive research he has undertaken, including use of the CTA archive resources. He is now compiling "Projectors to Preachers" featuring cinemas that became churches – a project which he expects to take around a year to complete!



STILL AVAILABLE BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

From Pictures to Pints – Cinemas That Became Pubs

£4.00 plus postage.

Cinemas & Theatres of Tower Hamlets – £6.99 plus postage.

Recently Published (reviewed in previous issues)

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

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

The Magic Screen – a history of the Regent Street Cinema £20.00 plus postage.

The Auditorium – in and around old North Warwickshire by Peter Lea £12.95 plus postage.

The CTA sales stall will be at the AGM at St Albans on 7 May and hopefully at the Film Fair event at the Cinema Museum London on 4 June.

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.

Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

Norfolk at the Pictures. A 96-page magazine-style publication, capturing the personal movie memories of Norfolk people pre- and post- Second World war, as well as contributions from Sir John Hurt. The magazine is written by experts and enthusiasts and illustrated with many rarely seen archive photographs. Available online from [cinemaplus.org.uk] or from local *Eastern Daily Press* offices and news retailers in the Norwich and Norfolk area. From the same website can also be obtained cinema maps of Norwich and Great Yarmouth.

CIRCUIT HISTORIES AVAILABLE

by Allen Eyles – all fully illustrated with gazetteers

ODEON 1 – Oscar Deutsch Entertains Our Nation – £19.99

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

THE GRANADA THEATRES – £18.99

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

CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II* Listed

Proposals relating to alterations of the **Stanford Hall Theatre** near Loughborough have now been tabled; these include disabled access provision and demolition of an annexe. Reassuringly, the decoratively painted asbestos safety curtain has been rendered safe, yet concern remains over the possibility that the rare stencilled auditorium murals might be over-painted. See last Bulletin and also p29 this Bulletin.

Drawings appertaining to a listed building consent application, which detail the intended extensions to the **Avenue** in the Northfields area of London, have now been lodged with the local Council and are available to view on its website. See p6 Bulletin 49/4.

Grade II Listed

It has been reported that developers wish to demolish the vacant **Royalty** at Harborne, which currently features upon Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' register. See p18 Bulletin 48/2.

The operator of the **Regal** at Evesham is proceeding with a scheme to add a further storey to the cinema in order to house two additional screens. The Association responded by expressing its approval of the materials involved and its overall endorsement of the desideratum.

It is pleasing to report that the threat to the **Angel Picture Theatre** in Islington from the Crossrail 2 project has now been rescinded. See p7 last Bulletin.

Permission has been granted to the developer for archaeological and historic building surveys of the **Regal** at Kingston-upon-Thames to be executed. The CTA will closely monitor continuing progress on this development to ensure that strict adherence to all building consent conditions is observed.

Unlisted



The **Picture House [Palladium]** at Hockley [Birmingham] has apparently been unoccupied for a considerable period. Despite being situated in a somewhat undesirable locale, it does however abut a conservation area. The local Council will thus be contacted in order to request that this be extended to include the venue; it will also be suggested that the building be considered for local listing. *Photo above taken March 2008.*

In parallel with a request to the local Council to include the **Regent [Odeon]** and the **Westover [ABC]** at Bournemouth in the adjoining conservation area, the local press is to be contacted to support the stance of many local residents who oppose the current plans for redevelopment. Although little of merit survives internally in either cinema, the facund façade of the **Regent** is an unequivocal asset to the streetscape; it is also imperative to ascertain if the expressive original frontage of the **Westover** survives behind the latter-day cladding. See last Bulletin.

Regrettably, permission has now been granted for demolition of the **Rivoli** at Sandown, which is intended to be replaced with housing. As a 'rearguard action', the CTA is requesting retention of the distinguished façade. In similar vein, a scheme has been outlined to replace the **Picture House** in Southampton's Woolston district with residential flats, although in this development the frontage would be integrated into the new block. See Newsreel p26.



Given the recent spate of refusals for listing, it is encouraging, if somewhat surprising, to report that Historic England has consulted the Association concerning a third party bid to list the **Picture Palace** in Bradford's Dudley Hill district. A previous listing application for this building reportedly failed; however, information on the cinema and comparators with contemporaneous exemplars have been forwarded in support of the application. *Photo above taken August 2005.*

A resident of the Doncaster area has requested that The Theatres Trust support a bid for local listing of the **Picture House**, only the façade of which remains. In response, the Council responsible reported that it doesn't currently maintain a local list although it aspires to establish one!



The judicial review which Save Britain's Heritage (SAVE) initiated to scrutinise the proposed demolition of the **Futurist** in Liverpool has distressingly ruled in favour of the cinema's destruction. SAVE has now petitioned the Court of Appeal for permission to appeal against this decision. See back page. *Photo above taken 2016 by Mike Taylor.*



An application to demolish the **Empire** at Loftus has been submitted. Although not of a quality to justify a listing application, the building is not without its merits; thus Redcar and Cleveland Council is to be requested to incorporate a recording condition if permission is granted to redevelop the site. *Photo above taken January 2007.*

REVIEW OF THE MEMBERS' SLIDE SHOW & SOCIAL

By Richard Norman

This annual event, held this year on Saturday 16 January, attracted seventy members and their guests and was held at our usual meeting venue, Alan Baxters' Gallery in Farringdon, London. It gave members an opportunity to present their personal passions and interests in cinema-related subjects – each presentation was arranged to last ten to fifteen minutes.

Keith Bye started the proceedings with *Two Astorias in the 21st Century*. Keith had taken a 'Red Rover' to snap some of the surviving cinema buildings in Lambeth, south London. His photos were contrasted by showing early photos. He included the Astorias at Streatham and Brixton, the considerably demolished Gaumont Palace (Bowling) Streatham but retaining the façade for redevelopment, the thriving Ritzy Brixton and several others.

David Jones followed with *The Last Granada Letter*. He showed how he was involved in arranging the canopy advertising letters of the EMD (Granada) Walthamstow during its final days. His talk included an excerpt of the EMD video of the 2003 last night's Gala show. Naturally, it is hoped that one-day these letters will return for use at the theatre. Examples of the actual clip-on letters were displayed for us to inspect.

Martin Tapsell's talk *I Can't Get No Satisfaction* was a tour through the numerous areas of the UK where he had resided resulting from his job as a librarian. He was unable to settle anywhere for long, calling himself the CTA's nomad! We were shown many images, starting with his roots in Dartford Kent (Mick Jagger territory) where his mother used many excuses as to why he shouldn't go to visit a cinema as a youngster. Eventually his career took him to see cinemas and films from Bute to Bromley.

Rachel Marks was next with her *Kinema Obscura II*, a continuation of her last year's talk in which, as the CTA's Assistant Archivist, she showed us some rare and unidentified photos that she asked the audience identify. Rachel had a theme of very early cinemas looking like gentlemen's toilets and showed other interesting advertising images pertaining to sex; as she firmly told the audience "...it's on all your minds!"



The Flix Movie Café in Hartlepool – photo by David Simpson

David Simpson's neat talk *Fancy a Cuppa?* explored two contrasting Movie Cafés where the auditoria are within café/bars. First was the Flix Movie Café in Hartlepool, where the 16-seat cinema has comfortable sofas and settees and has a rather Bohemian feel. The other was the Blue Walnut Café in Torquay, a more traditional cinema style with 23 original tip-up seats.

Brian Hall introduced *Singing Audiences*. Here was a novel entrant to our portfolio. Brian described how literally thousands of glass slide images had been donated to the CTA Archive. These featured popular verses of the era to encourage audiences to sing along with accompaniment, usually by cinema organ. Our audience was invited to sing along with *Happy Days Are Here Again*, *My Old Dutch*, *Let's All Go Down the Strand* and *Bless 'em All*. A 'bouncing ball' miraculously appeared from nowhere to encourage the audience to sing along.

Ian Meyrick was billed as *Meyrick's Musical Melodies* and we were fortunate that he was able to give us live accompaniment for the sing-along audience on electronic keyboard, kindly loaned for the occasion by **Joyce Braddon**.

INTERMISSION

Allen Eyles's talk was entitled *Two Sides of Sheffield* in which he reported on a recent visit to two listed cinemas in the suburbs of Sheffield, opened two months apart in 1920. He contrasted the hopeful future of the Abbeydale Picture House (which hosted a week-end of film and digital screenings) in the improving Antiques Quarter with the long abandoned Adelphi in the rundown and deserted Attercliffe area on the opposite side of the City.



The Batalha cinema in Porto – photo by Elaine Harwood

Elaine Harwood's *A Surprise Hides in Porto* showed us slides taken during a tour of Porto in 2015, focusing on the central Batalha Cinema of 1944-7, a rebuilding by Artur Andrade. The listed building has a 950-seat auditorium with two original foyers, currently mothballed. She also showed the Coliseu of 1938-40 and other 20th Century buildings – as well as the trams!

Martin Cleave enlightened us with his talk *Bright Lights, Big City* in which decorative neon lights were used on some cinema exteriors. He started with what was probably the earliest and most distinctive design used on the Studio Oxford Street. Other examples followed, including the listed Odeons at Weston-super-Mare and Beckenham as well as the more elaborate display of the Screen on the Green Islington. Martin also gave us a brief explanation of how neon lighting is created.

Neville Taylor intrigued us with *Seven Wonders of the World* but, as he pointed out, this was illusionary as it turned out these were not from the ancient world proving that our seven wonders were to be from the modern cinema world – no doubt prompted by his visits to them with the CTA. We were shown some magnificent exteriors and interiors of the Chicago Theatre, United Artists Theatre Los Angeles, State Theatre Melbourne, State Theatre Sydney, Civic Theatre Auckland, Paramount Theatre Aurora, concluding with a movie clip of the Fox Detroit.

Before we knew it, time had moved so fast and it was nine-o'clock and we were unable to treat the audience to a second session of sing-along slides, **Gavin McGrath's** talk to launch his new book *Celluloid to Cereal* (cinemas that became supermarkets), nor **Graham Rumble's** finale of clips from well-known movie musicals. It was a shame but I feel sure that we'll be able to see these on a future occasion. Overall the audience was treated to the rich tapestry of what it's possible to enthuse about in the world of cinema with differing styles of presentation. Some members who had enjoyed the show commented that what they liked was the surprise, spontaneity and variety of what was a 'Members Miscellany'.

As usual, our Master of Ceremonies was our Chairman **David Trevor-Jones**. **Richard Norman** was responsible for organising the event and offering members assistance in creating their PowerPoint presentations. An intermission for drinks and light refreshments was included, which were prepared and served by our Events Organiser, **Ray Ritmeester** and his assistants. **Jeremy Buck** was there with the CTA Book Stall to offer some of the many specialist cinema books available. **Neville Taylor** was the man in the box office taking our admittances, whilst tradition held that members giving presentations were admitted without charge.

Finally, I would like to sincerely thank all of our 'brave' participants for their efforts in putting together and sharing their short presentations

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compiled by Harry Rigby

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YET MORE WANDERINGS – PART 1

By Hugh Sykes



The Compton from the Lyric Wellingborough in Bilston Town Hall

14 March 2015: By train and tram to Bilston (West Midlands) for a first concert on the ex Lyric/ABC Wellingborough 2/5 Compton. Removed from the cinema in 1967 to Weaver's School in Wellingborough and used there for Assembly and musical events, being installed by the school staff and pupils. The console, without lift and illuminated surround, was placed in a pit centre stage in front of the proscenium. Removed by Steve Tovey and friends, overhauled with the blessing of the local Council, reinstalled at the Town Hall Bilston in 2007, being used weekly on Thursdays at 1:15pm for their tea dances in the upstairs hall. I believe the venue was the first place in Bilston for moving pictures – Prof Woods? For this first concert, organised through the Theatre Organ Club, we were entertained most beautifully by Damon Willets and Cameron Lloyd – a really wonderful afternoon. There was a presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award by the TOC by Grant Pilcher (Southern District Secretary) to Steve Tovey. I believe a further concert was planned for November.



The former Imperial/Odeon and the façade of the Alhambra Bilston

Whilst in Bilston I had a walkabout. Across the road is the former Odeon, now a wedding venue and down the High Street is the altered frontage of the Alhambra cinema, built behind a row of shops; the auditorium has been demolished.



The Picture House Uckfield

Easter 2015: Ann and I travelled down to Kent for Easter, staying in Dymchurch at Dr Syn's Guest House. Dr Syn was a local character – part real, part myth – of years ago, based somewhat on a local Rector. On the way we paused at Uckfield to photograph the three-screen Picture House, fully open on latest releases.



The Windsor/Palace Broadstairs

Day two took us along the coast to Margate, passing the multiplex at Westfield, to view the Dreamland complex. In the park the wooden scenic railway looked quite complete; as with the other rides, it opened on 19 June 2015. The Dreamland cinema was boarded-up on our visit. Inside, the theatre the 4/19 Compton/Noterman organ is intact. We drove to Broadstairs and photographed the only cinema, the Palace (ex Windsor); a single-screen operation, fully open with an organ concert at 1:15pm on Easter Sunday – an electronic instrument with an illuminated console, played by Colin Jay.

The next town, slightly inland, was Sandwich. We had a good stroll around this delightful place and found the Empire cinema in Delf Street, a 1930s Art Deco beauty. Fully open with the latest films, using the old circle extended forward, a very comfortable venue. The former stalls area is used as a lounge for other events. From here, a short visit to Deal and found three former cinemas: the Odeon, with a rebuilt frontage for nightclub use; then in King Street the Royal, currently an amusement arcade on the ground floor



The Empire Sandwich



The former Odeon and Royal in Deal

with snooker upstairs via a rear/side entrance; then on the front the Regent, awaiting its future. Sadly the weather has taken its toll on the outside fabric of the building. Leaving for the Dover Transport Museum we found a surprise here; inside the main building, in the form of a replica frontage, is The Wellington Hall Animated Picture House with pseudo canopy, paybox, light, stills etc. It's the exit and entrance to/from the museum. Well worth a visit and a cuppa!



The Wellington Hall Animated Picture House in Dover Museum

On Easter Sunday (day three) we ventured across to the East Kent Railway at Shepherdswell for a ride on this light railway. It was previously used to carry coal from the mines, Tilmanston Colliery being one of the last. A £1.00 return was on offer – it was packed! Anyway, back down the road and into Folkestone for a walk around and a meal. Afterwards to the Guildhall, which houses the Silver Screen cinema; although not open when we called, it does show the latest releases.

Then back to the car and onto Hythe for the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway. Behind the station restaurant is a hall that from 1970-72 was the town's only cinema, on 16mm. Now owned by the RH&DR it is used for functions, exhibitions etc. Our next call was to New Romney (HQ of RH&DR) and the interesting church with hall nearby. The Assembly Room in Church Approach is quite a historic structure (as well as the church itself) having had cinema shows



Folkestone Guildhall and the Silver Screen cinema

therein as the Pavilion Picture Palace. Open for use as a meeting room and community events. Our last call was to Lydd for the Railway Station (not open) and the Fire Station, where once stood the Regal cinema – nothing to see.



The Bijou cinema in the Engine Shed at Tunbridge Wells West

Day four and return home, firstly via Tenterden for views of two buildings, namely the early Cinema Palace, which houses several small shops sideways through the auditorium and along the High Street the Embassy cinema, a very fine Shipman and King circuit building, in current use by M&Co. A brief stop at the Kent and East Sussex Railway Rolvenden station to view the locos. Tunbridge Wells was the final call and the sad sight of the demolished Ritz/Essoldo. A parking place was found and a walk along The Pantiles with good bookshops thereon (cinema books purchased). Can I recommend a visit to the engine shed at Tunbridge Wells West station? There is a nine-seat Bijou cinema showing DVDs – it's lovely!



The Glyndwr Corwen ‡

3 May: took me to North Wales. I called in at Corwen on the way to see three venues: the extended Llangollen Railway at Corwen East; the Pavilion is now demolished – a barn of a building is used mainly for concerts and shows. The Glyndwr cinema, as we know, is divided for retail outlets and only the front part remains open as a DIY store;

some of the original doors remain in use. On to Porthmadog, passing the sad and dark Coliseum fenced off and awaiting its fate. The Welsh Highland Heritage Railway were having an enthusiasts' gala. I think they were pleased to see me as it was very quiet and raining.

25 May: a brief return to South Wales (not raining). Firstly to Pontycymer for a Garw Valley Railway open day, then round to Maesteg. The Plaza (next to Asda) was being stripped out – cooling, air vents and artefacts – but the roof and side walls were intact, apart from an extra opening alongside the road. I had a look inside Wetherspoon's *The Sawyers Arms* – not a single item from its days as the New Theatre. Photos show the former Sawyers Arms Hotel, the site now being the left part of Wetherspoon's. Due to road congestion, I went by rail from Cogan to Barry Island. I had a ride on the Tourist Railway and a good look around this rejuvenated resort, funfair reopened and people everywhere. A popular venue is the former Roxy cinema, which is housed over some shops and currently a children's play area.



The Palace Chatteris

30 May: Ann and I drove to Ely but unfortunately it was graduation day at the Cathedral with thousands of people and nowhere to park, so we ventured back a little and visited Chatteris and Ramsey instead. A place to park was found and Chatteris was ours. Two cinema venues here: the Palace on the main street, entry via a set of doors between Lloyds Bank and a shop reveals another set of doors and a flight of stairs up to the cinema, now an Indian Restaurant *Saffron Cuisine*, which was open. Around the corner is the still-standing *Empress*, which was converted to a swimming pool and is still open, entrance is via a right-hand door. The frontage had a car showroom / workshop built onto it but it's now boarded-up and out of use. However the hoarding has 'Stars of the Cinema' painted onto it, including David Niven.



The Empress Chatteris

28 June: Passing Oswestry we noted the Factory Shop open on the former Regal site, exceedingly altered inside. Likewise the former Kings has Wilkinson's Stores therein but very little exists of the cinema (three walls and part of the roof). However, open is Kinoculture in Arthur Street. I noted the details in the local paper and hope to visit soon.

20-22 July: Ann and I were invited to stay in Cardiff with Catholic priest friend Father Andy. So after lunch we visited the Nantgarw store of the National Museum of Wales by prior appointment; plenty to see, road and rail but no cinema items. However, a lovely visit. Just up the road is Treforest and the grade II listed New Cecil Cinema. Although the



The New Cecil Cinema Treforest

frontage / foyer area is a gem, the rest of the building is converted for 'Kiss Shot Sports Bar'. In the afternoon of the next day we had an excursion to the seaside, first at Penarth and later Barry and Barry Island. Passing through the town of Penarth I noted the former Windsor Kinema, an 800-seater converted for garage use. Then the Washington luxury cinema, which once had 1,300 seats, now has a supermarket in the auditorium and a gallery in the foyer. Across from the station is the Paget Rooms, which has a stage with tabs and a balcony. I believe films were shown here for a short while, many years ago. Down to the Promenade and the lovingly restored Pier Pavilion. I had a good look inside. Our friend Father Andy likes art so he was very keen on the exhibition in the main hall. There is a small cinema upstairs, created from the old balcony, which runs Wednesday to Sunday each week. Refreshments can be purchased and a small room is available to hire. I can recommend a visit. We passed through Barry and noted the new building on the site of the Theatre Royal. We also noted the former Savoy was open for its current use.

to be continued...

All photos by the author on day of visit, except # by Harry Rigby July 2014



The Pier Pavilion Penarth

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

MEMORIES OF A PROJECTIONIST

By Wayne Boss (Australia)

It could be said that cinema projection is an obscure profession. The projectionist is never noticed entering or leaving the cinema but a glimpse of shadowy movement from behind the glass portholes mounted high up at the rear of a cinema provides reassuring comfort for the patron that everything is in control and that screening will soon commence. This narrative contains anecdotes of one projectionist's experiences and will also enlighten the reader on some technical aspects of projection. You will find no reference to ritzy big name cinemas with their expensively adorned foyers and impeccable interiors; only to a small cinema chain and the dedicated managers, staff and characters who worked hard to keep the business afloat in a competitive industry.

My first position as a projectionist in England was in July 1977 with the Classic Cinema Group at the **Classic Moulin** in the West End of London. The Moulin's forte was erotic [X] rated films. I termed these 'overcoat brigade films,' many starring the famous and busty Mary Millington. The cinema was situated on the edge of London's Soho district in Great Windmill Street. This location was very apt considering the cinema's close proximity to the Piccadilly Circus Statue of Eros, the God of Love.



The Classic Moulin +

The **Moulin** was a five-screen complex where four projectionists (operators) worked in pairs, sixteen hours every other day. The auditoria were large enough to allow a profit but not so large as to lose intimacy. The equipment setup was virtually idiot-proof (myself included) and was designed to screen the most number of films with the least amount of projectionists. All projector mechanisms were Cinemecanica brand, with attached lamphouses containing xenon bulb light sources. These bulbs provide a constant level of illumination and were slowly replacing the carbon arc as a light source throughout the industry. The film spools were of such a size that they could hold a two-hour feature film. This modern and efficient combination allowed the five cinemas to function smoothly each day with only two projectionists on site.

In order to keep films rolling continuously my colleague and I spent our working hours preparing film and maintaining and preparing equipment. New film releases were delivered to the cinema in hexagonal metal canisters containing two thousand foot spools of film. Film preparation involved checking every inch of film for problems such as tears or broken sprocket holes and then splicing the individual spools of film together to make a full feature on one large spool. This spool could then be screened with the use of only one projector. An entrance ticket was good for the day so that men (and sometimes women) could indulge themselves in the on-screen antics over and over to their hearts content.



The projection box at the Classic Moulin

The cinema building was an ad-hoc structure, renovated to accommodate the five cinemas. It had external stairways leading to the different projection rooms; one room for each cinema, rather than one central projection room servicing all cinemas. Sometimes there was a mad scramble up and down stairways and across the roof to get to other projection rooms if two films happened to be finishing at the same time. This was a hazardous business due to the risk of slipping on wet steel stairs and falling through an adjacent bordello roof, or having one's foot chewed off by one of the size XL rats that scurried around the building!

My fellow projectionist (colleague) Michael Poy¹ and I were given autonomy to organise our own breaks; sometimes for an hour or three if needed. I sometimes stayed and chatted with the girls who worked the candy and ticket bars, or took walks around the West End, visiting tourist spots such as Trafalgar Square, Westminster Cathedral or The National Gallery. If the weather was fine I often strolled around the wooded parks that skirted Buckingham Palace, sometimes meeting the changing of the guard but never The Queen. Being kept on my toes at the Moulin and having friendly workmates was enjoyable but the day arrived when I had saved enough to finance a trip to 'the continent'. It was time to load up my bicycle and start pedaling.



Givet Youth Hostel, France

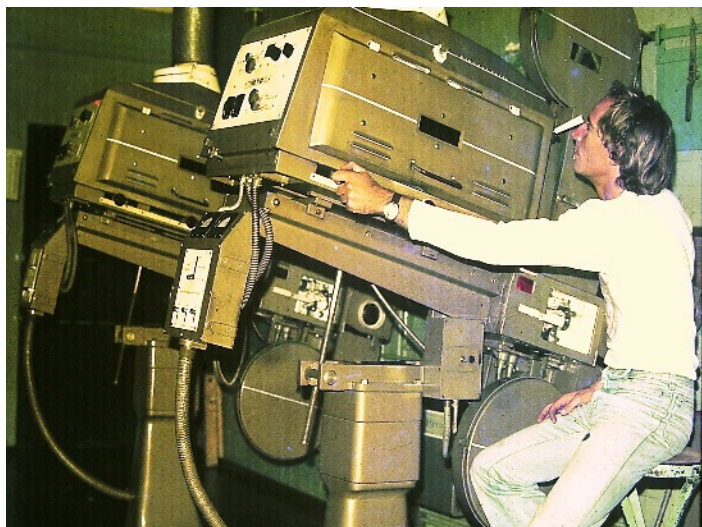
On my return to London in February 1978 my immediate port-of-call was Paul Podeshua, the chief of **Classic Cinemas**. Paul was a dear man and while gently explaining that he had no openings for me his phone rang. His face paled at news that a projectionist from a seaside town south of London had fallen down the cinema stairs and badly injured his back. With a look of desperation he asked, "Wayne, would you be prepared to work at Ramsgate for a while?" I cringed at the thought of obtaining work from another's misfortune but the mysterious hand of fate had set the stage and I humbly accepted Paul's offer. He arranged permanent digs at a local Bed and Breakfast before escorting me to Victoria Station, where I was given some money and a train ticket. We shook hands and bade each other farewell. With my small bag of worldly possessions I set off for the coast.



The interior of the Classic [ex Odeon] Ramsgate

¹ If anyone knows Michael's whereabouts, please contact your editor.

The **Classic Cinema Ramsgate** was straight out of the 1930s Art Deco period and still using pre-war equipment: carbon arcs and small film spools. I arrived at the cinema just before the first feature of the evening was about to 'hit the sheet'. An operator from another local cinema had been brought in to lace-up the projectors and gave me a quick overview of the projection room before leaving me holding the bag. First and paramount I checked the accuracy of his work. As the second hand headed for seven o'clock I 'struck-up' and adjusted the carbon-arc of projector number one for maximum brightness.



Adjusting the carbon arc at Ramsgate

There are two horizontally opposed carbon rods mounted in a carbon arc lamp house, one of larger diameter than the other and both connected to a power supply. These rods slowly burn away and must be regularly adjusted and eventually replaced during projection. When the tips of these two rods are brought together (struck) they complete an electrical circuit. On separation, a white hot crater is formed at the end of the larger diameter rod. This small crater provides the light source for projection. The crater is reflected onto a parabolic mirror mounted inside the rear of the lamp house. The mirror focuses the crater on the gate, where each frame of the film passes. The image on the film is then projected through the lens and onto the screen, at various levels of brightness depending on how well the arc is tended.

I readjusted the carbon arc and turned on the projector. The projector's electric motor whirled into action. The spools took up and began to turn. I slowly brought down the house lights with my left hand while my right hand rested on the lamp-house douser lever. I awaited the familiar click of the spliced leader join on the film to pass through the gate. This click means that the film is now ready to be projected onto the screen. At the click I lifted the lamp-house lever. The projected image was superimposed on the curtains and I hit the curtain open button. These were performed in one simultaneous action. I then fully extinguished the house lights for a perfect presentation.

The feature hit the sheet exactly on time, while the popcorn eating audience below sank into their seats, blissfully unaware of the behind the scenes drama. I congratulated myself on a professional presentation performed under pressure and could now familiarise myself with the projection room before the next changeover. The term 'changeover' refers to the alternate working of two projectors. Just before the spool of the operating projector is about to run out of film, the projectionist starts the second projector. On spotting a cue mark on the screen the second projector is brought into operation and the previous one shut down, thereby keeping continuity of the film and avoiding a brilliant white screen! I was thankful at that moment for my time in old cinemas, where I had cut my teeth on carbon-arcs and ancient equipment. My first night had been a success and with youthful wonder I headed for my lodgings and a peaceful night's sleep.

My Bed and Breakfast was managed by an older couple of very conservative British stock. It was as far removed from Faulty Towers as one could find. One of the rules of the establishment was that no female friends were allowed in and certainly no shenanigans were to take place on the premises. I had become friendly with one particular usherette, who may have seen me as an exotic antipodean and who on her final shift wanted to become more than friends. Being a gentleman it was only right that I tried my best to fulfil her wish and suggested that we make a detour on our way home via my lodgings.

We arrived late in the night and tiptoed our way through the front door. My hand was locked onto hers slowly guiding her through the darkness. We had nearly reached the staircase that led to my room when suddenly, with what seemed like an atomic flash in intensity, the lounge room light went on. We found ourselves standing transfixed facing the manager and his wife! After being chastised and with the wind taken from my sails, I escorted my friend back to the corner from where we normally diverged on our nightly snow-trodden trek to our homes. As snowflakes fell around us we kissed and waved goodbye for the last time.

After working the Ramsgate Cinema alone for three weeks I was given an assistant, Tom. He was a very nice bloke to whom life had dealt some harsh cards. I made it my business to teach him everything I knew about projection, hoping that he would be asked to carry on when I left.



Tom rewinding the film

We got on well and between changeovers would sit next to the open projection room window and watch snowflakes flutter from the night sky, as our trusty machines droned away in the background. The cinema ran without incident for the following three months until I was asked back to London to begin work in the leafy suburb of Colindale.

On arrival at the **Classic Cinema Colindale** I was bestowed the title, 'Chief Projectionist'. This was simply because I was the only projectionist. I was introduced to my casual assistant, Harry. Harry was a colourful eccentric who reminded me of a poor man's Spike Milligan and who wore baggy red trousers complemented by a sloppy cardigan and dishevelled hair. Although he was my 'assistant' he only ever did odd jobs around the cinema and never worked in the projection room. At our first meeting this quintessential Cockney blurted out in his finest East London accent, "I won' caw ya mishta Boss 'caush ya ain't me boss. I'w caw ya mishta Wayne." I took an immediate liking to him. Once the formalities were over, Harry thought it was his duty to inform me that a projectionist had once been found hanging by the neck from the projection room ceiling beams! It can be a lonely occupation!



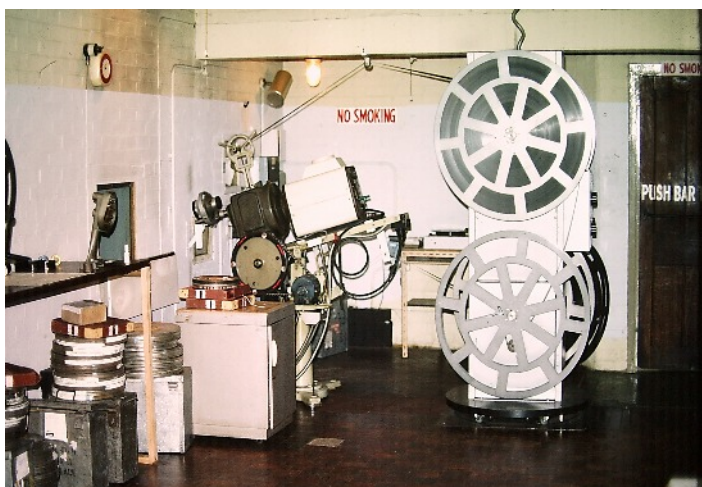
Harry (in dustcoat), John Payne & manager John Pond [2nd & 3rd left]

By the end of my first shift I had forgotten about Harry's grisly story. Having just arrived without 'digs,' I thought what better place to camp for the night than in the projection room. This was until the building emptied and the power was switched off. I was to discover that a building filled with people, lights and noise has a very different ambience to one dark and empty, especially when that building is an old cinema and even more so when one has a fertile imagination! Lying alone in the dark, high up in the now silent cinema, I became gripped by fear at thoughts of the projectionist swinging from the ceiling beams and at the sounds of the cooling building groaning and creaking as if in conversation with itself. I was stranded in a dead calm sea of misty suburbia, captive on an ghostly ship with its cargo of memories of long forgotten stars and hanged projectionists! Petrified I lay in the dark, huddled in the safety of my sleeping bag for what seemed like hours until sleep came. In the morning I awoke in a sore and sorry state and went searching for more suitable accommodation.



The Classic [ex Odeon] Colindale — “Who needs a rope?”

I hastily accepted the first offer of accommodation. This was a two-story rooming house managed by a large elderly gent who only ever said, “Orright?” whenever I happened to pass him on the street. The rooms were adorned in hues of creams and apricots giving them a warm and homely atmosphere. It also offered the convenience of being situated just around the corner from the cinema. Like Ramsgate, the Colindale Cinema was large and of Art Deco design, the exterior of which had become rundown over the years. The original projection equipment however had been replaced by modern ‘towers’ and xenon bulb light sources. A tower is a piece of equipment on which two feature films can be mounted and rotated in order to facilitate a quick film change between screenings. Colindale differed from Ramsgate in one other aspect: part of the main auditorium had been sectioned off into a second small theatre. This small theatre ran the erotic films typical of the Classic Moulin and because of this was known colloquially as a ‘Tatler Club’. That’s British politeness for you; you and I both know it was really a ‘Titler Club’!



The projection room at the Tatler Colindale

The work schedule was heavy at Colindale. I screened mainstream films continuously in the large auditorium every day and on Saturday night from midnight, screened a genre adored by a certain ethnic group: Bollywood films. The cinema would fill up with the members of the Indian community, smiling and chatting and eager to enjoy a few hours immersed in the sights and sounds of their cultural heritage. I also enjoyed the music and colourful displays typical of those movies and always welcomed a gratuity from the community leader at the end of the night.

The Tatler Club opened only on Tuesday and often to a full house. This was because it had one major draw card: a live striptease performance between each screening! To the pulse of erotic music I would operate the stage lights while the artists performed their titillating full frontal gyrations, drawing the goggle-eyed male audience in closer and closer to centre stage. The artists usually came up to the projection room after each performance where I would provide refreshments. I was once invited for a ‘dirty weekend’ at Brighton by one dazzling performer but balked at her insistence that I try Amyl Nitrite [poppers]. Apparently this substance is inhaled at just the precise moment in order to enhance the experience. I was miffed that she had

suggested this because after what I had seen on stage I was more than enthusiastic. However, I was less enthusiastic about experimenting with a potentially toxic substance that I knew little about.

On Tatler Club screening days a distinguished older gentleman with a beautiful rich voice and who wore an expensive looking Russian styled fur hat, would suddenly appear in the projection room just as a striptease performance was about to begin. He would just as suddenly disappear when the performance had ended. He introduced himself as John Payne. I assumed that he managed the women and came to check if they were earning their keep. This was until the day I enquired, “And do you manage all of the women, John?” His eyes widened with surprise and to my embarrassment he replied in clear, rich tones, “Oh no, goodness no, I live across the road. I’m the unofficial caretaker of the cinema.” He may not have been their manager but he certainly enjoyed checking on them. John had lived in the Hendon area all of his life and had once been a radio broadcaster. He and his lovely Swiss-born wife Marie kept me ‘under their wing’ while I worked at Colindale and sent Christmas cards every year until they both passed on.

In those days London was renowned for its characters. Harry was one such character and one evening another landed on my projection room doorstep. With his portly girth and thick beard he reminded me of the actor, Sebastian Cabot. He even carried a walking stick! He had been sent by an employment agency to see if he was capable of doing the work. When I assured him that I would teach him everything I knew about projection, he boomed with a look of indignation. “Goodness gracious, man, I don’t want a job! I’m only complying with the conditions of my dole payment!” This was pre-Thatcherism at its finest! I’d always had a soft spot for these lovable larger-than-life characters and enjoyed sharing many laughs over the weeks. Finally he had ‘done his time’ and returned to his preferred former lifestyle.



“Goodbye ‘Sebastian,’ take it easy old chap.”

Eventually the day arrived when I had to return home to Australia. I had enjoyed life in Colindale and considered it the epitome of all things ‘English’. It had manicured parks, rose gardens and neat two-storey cottages lining its streets. There was no busy shopping centre but tiny outlets on the High Street catered for most needs; anything exotic could be obtained from the ubiquitous curio shops and street markets found in other areas of the City. There was no local library but I was able to source reading material from a bookmobile, which visited each week.

Although very different from my native home between the mountains and the sea, the general civility* of the people made the place. In addition to my little bag of worldly possessions, I took with me warm and lasting memories of the people and situations experienced in that pre-digital age of old fashioned cinema projection.

*yes... the ‘overcoat brigade’ are included.

All photos sent in by the author, except + courtesy Dusashenka

Wayne adds: I’m happy that the photos I took all those years ago of the people I worked with will be seen by the members. I never met one person in my time over there that I found disagreeable and was quite touched by the spirit and good humour of the English. In fact, I sometimes I get a bit misty when I think of Paul Podeshua and others that offered me kindness at that time.

I suppose my article might be interesting as most young Aussies on working holidays in those days worked in pubs and the like but maybe I was the only one (besides my mate at the Plaza, near the Moulin) who worked as a projectionist, being a somewhat obscure type of job.

CINEMA-GOING IN MY ILKESTON

By Patricia Spencer

One of my favourite pastimes has always been a visit to the cinema but it has changed a lot in my lifetime. From the age of five years old my mum used to take me, as a treat, to one of the local cinemas in Ilkeston; we had four in the town at that time. Those days we usually had to join a long queue to get in. In the cinema and theatres we always had to stand to listen to the National Anthem being played. Can you imagine anyone doing that now? That ended in the late 1960s.



The Scala Ilkeston in September 2003

The first of the purpose-built cinemas to arrive in Ilkeston was the Scala in 1913. This is the only one now still in use as a cinema in the town. It stands in a prominent position on the Market Place and is a Grade II listed building. It is believed to be the second oldest remaining purpose-built cinema in the country, incorporating features of Edwardian, classical and Art Nouveau designs. It still has one of the old style 35mm film projectors, which I believe is still used from time to time – although most of the films are played on digital now. After having a makeover a few years ago by the new owners it now seats 400 in the auditorium and both single and double seats are available. In the winter the seats by the radiators are always taken first. The upstairs seating where I used to love to go for a treat as a child has not been in use for many years. One of the last films I saw there years ago in the sixties before it closed was Doris Day and James Garner in *Move Over Darling*. My husband and I have now started going again occasionally when there is a new film we want to see. {22170}

For many years this cinema has been believed to be haunted. They say it was built over a graveyard, although I believe they moved all the occupants before building the Scala. One of my friends was a painter and he worked in the auditorium on his own many times. He spoke of seeing many ghosts there. But one in particular intrigued him. He was busy painting one day and felt a cold draught. Looking up he saw the figure of a lady in Victorian dress going up the stairs and he decided to follow her. He particularly noticed her black boots as she led the way into the auditorium. Once inside she began to reach up to the side wall and he realised that she was putting out the old gas lamps that would have been there when the cinema was first built. She then retraced her steps downstairs and disappeared.

The second cinema to be built in Ilkeston was the Kings Picture House in 1914 and was named after a visit to the town from King George V earlier in the year. The Kings stood at the higher end of Bath Street – the main street in Ilkeston and the 'luxurious' auditorium seated 1,199 with walls lined with tapestry panels. I have been reliably informed that Mrs Flora Rice used to play the piano at the Kings in the days of the Silent Movies. Before talkies were even thought about the pianist provided the atmosphere for the silent films. It must have been very exciting to have the live music. {43322}

In the 1950s when I first started going with mum they still had the usherettes in uniform including a hat and they carried torches to show you to your seats and to shine on anyone who was misbehaving in any way. They also had an interval between screenings when the lights would go up and they would walk down the aisle selling ice creams

from trays hung round their necks. As mum and I went regularly we knew all the staff and managers. The managers always looked really smart and wore a collar and tie, a suit and highly polished shoes – a bit different from the staff today in the multiplex cinemas in their casual attire of Tee-shirts and jeans.

I remember going to one of the cinemas after going Christmas shopping and the manager let us put all our parcels in the office whilst we went in to watch the film. I was very excited, as in one of the parcels was my Christmas present; a beautiful doll dressed as a bride. I loved her dearly and kept her until I was seventeen when I passed her on to my boyfriend's sister. Those days you didn't just get one film you would probably get a newsreel along with a cartoon and sometimes a change of film from afternoon to evening viewing. It was really good value for money. All the cinemas always did a Saturday afternoon show for the children. I was never allowed to go on my own but listening to the tales from other friends that went I think the staff sometimes had a hard time with some of them. One of my friends went regularly to these showings at the Ritz and some of her favourites were *The Three Stooges*, *Hopalong Cassidy*, *Zorro* and *Old Mother Riley*. There would always be a cliff-hanger at the end of the main film so that you would want to go back the following week. But from what she tells me, very often it would be a different film altogether. She was always given a shilling to spend – five pence in today's money. This bought her lunch, sweets and money left for the pictures, which cost a tanner. These Saturday afternoon showings were called the Tanner Rush.

I remember when *Gone with the Wind* came to Ilkeston – it was shown at the Ritz and the photographs outside were fantastic. The queues to get in were massive. Even my dad went to see that one. I think it was shown in CinemaScope so that would be around 1954.



Bath Street Ilkeston c1936 with the Kings [R] & the Globe [L] {2}

Ten years later in 1964 the Kings disappeared from our lives when it was demolished. Later this area was to become part of the shopping precinct we have today. The last film to be shown before it was demolished was *The Thrill of It All* starring Doris Day. A cinema I knew absolutely nothing about until it was mentioned to me a few weeks ago was the Globe Theatre. This was built a year after the Kings in 1915 and stood near the bottom of Bath Street. Apparently, the *Ilkeston Advertiser* stated that visitors to the town would be irresistibly drawn to the building with a 'magic dome'. However the magic of this cinema did not remain for very long and it was demolished to make way for the Woolworth emporium in 1923.

The New Theatre was built on Lord Haddon Road as a theatre in the 1890s and many of the famous stars worked on the stage here: Gracie Fields and Charlie Chaplin to name but two. I was lucky enough to go to a pantomime there as a child; it was so different from the cinema and my first experience of a live show. I am not sure if they were the first theatre to show films in Ilkeston or if they followed the trend of the other two. Unfortunately this building was also demolished to make way for a nursing home round about the late 1970s. One of my friends lived nearby when she was a little girl and remembers a lady called Margaret, who would take a group of children in to



The New Theatre Ilkeston during demolition [3]

the New Theatre to see the latest movies, as they were not allowed in without an adult. They would congregate on the steps waiting for her with their pennies and she would take a big group in with her. This site really saddens me every time I go past. I always check to see if I can still remember it as it was. It gets harder all the time! I am informed that the Scala, the Kings and later also the New Theatre were at one time all owned by the Brailsford family.

Last but not least is the Ritz cinema. This beautiful Art Deco style building still stands today, in pride of place on South Street. The Ritz cinema was built for the independent exhibitors Ritz (Ilkeston) Ltd and was built in the Art Deco style by the Nottingham architect, Reginald WG Cooper. This was his seventh cinema design project and it opened on 20 May 1938, ten years before I was born. The film was *Stella Dallas* with Barbara Stanwick and Victor McLaglen, two very famous names from early Hollywood films. Victor McLaglen was probably best known for his rôle of adversary to John Wayne in the film *The Quiet Man*. They did many more films together. Victor McLaglen was guest of honour at the first screening of *Stella Dallas* in Ilkeston. He was invited by his nephew JV McLaglen, who was the first manager of the cinema. {22173}

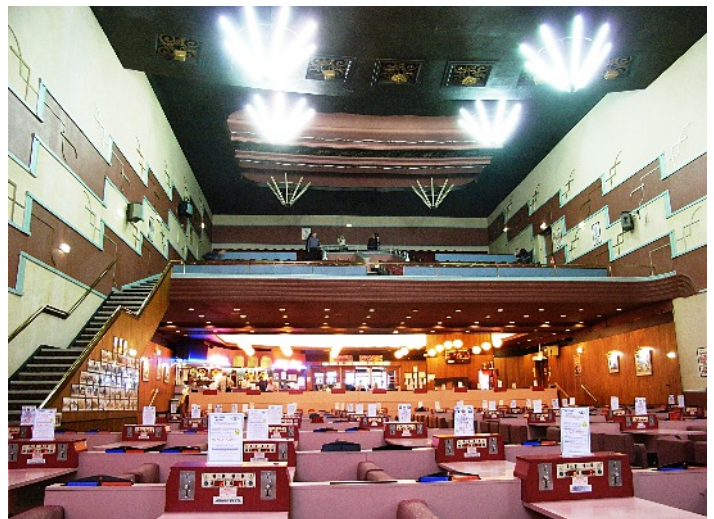


The Ritz Ilkeston on bingo in September 2003 [4]

The manager at the Ritz when I was young was Mr Dresser, who was formerly in the Guards. He was very tall and slim with dark hair and a moustache. He looked like a gentleman and acted in the same manner. The cinema had a very distinctive style that was very similar to the Odeon theatre, which was being built at the time. The most prominent feature of this building being the slender fin-tower that topped the main façade, which was covered in light biscuit coloured Doulton tile-work.



The BFI100 plaque on the Ritz [4]



The interior of the Ritz Ilkeston, on the CTA visit in May 2008 [4]

The Ritz seated 922 in the stalls and 480 in the circle. In later years the rather narrow proscenium did not adapt well for screening CinemaScope films and the top masking had to be lowered to give a wide-screen effect. This iconic building sadly closed its doors to film-goers in 1968. The last film shown there, according to records was *The House of Wax* starring Vincent Price. This of course was a Horror Movie.

The records I checked said that the Ritz closed in 1958. I know this is incorrect as I met my husband on the steps outside on 4 July 1964 after going to see yet another horror film, *The Castle of Terror*. I was subjected to a second viewing of this film, on the toss of a coin on the evening before, by a friend. It was the toss of a coin that changed my life forever. My husband and I celebrated our Ruby Wedding Anniversary by taking family and friends to see a special screening of *National Treasure Two* starring Nicholas Cage in 1998 at the Scala cinema.

The golden age of cinema lasted from the late 1920s to the early 1960s, when films were prolifically issued by the Hollywood studios. The first movie incorporating sound was *The Jazz Singer* and Warner Bros gained huge success from this movie and went from strength to strength. The first animated Walt Disney film was *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* made in 1939. I wonder if Walt Disney ever imagined what was to come with year after year of new animated films for the children and yes, us grown-ups too and all the merchandising that has developed from them; not to mention Disney's theme parks. 1939 also saw classics being made such as *Goodbye Mr Chips*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Wuthering Heights*, *It's a Wonderful Life* with James Stewart and *Gone With The Wind* with Vivien Leigh and the handsome, suave Clark Gable. So many great films but it is sad but true fact that most of the old cinemas have been demolished and those that are left are no longer used for their original purpose. We are lucky to have the Scala in our town. Let us make sure we keep on using it!

Reprinted with permission from the Ilkeston Advertiser;
organised by Christopher Smith

Photo Credits: [1] Harry Rigby; [2] www.picturethepast.org.uk;
[3] Robert Lee - www.mylkeston.co.uk

A LONDON PALLADIUM STORY

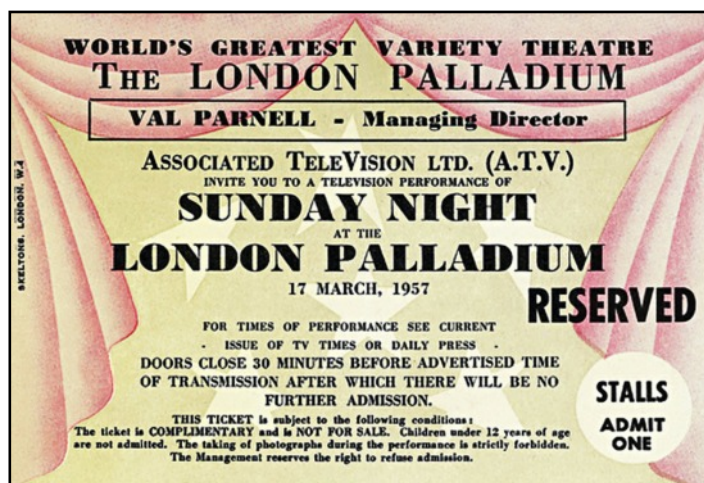
By Ron Knee

I worked at the London Palladium for three years from 1966 to 1969. I joined the engineering and electrical department as a show man and my very first job was to stand on the side of the stage and unwind by hand the microphone cable for Shirley Bassey. Radio mics in those days never worked properly, with the inevitable break up and crackling. It was not as easy as it sounds; you had to keep all the excess cable rolled up in one hand and the feed it out to her with the other as she moved across the stage. Sometimes she would yank on the cable almost pulling me on stage. I was watched continually by the great Jack Matthews, Stage Director and master of all he surveyed. He wore white gloves, which I thought at the time came with the position. He could have played Ivan the Terrible with no trouble. One night while I was waiting for Shirley to appear for her act, a stage hand walked behind a back drop and slightly touched it, making it move. Jack turned to the Deputy Stage Manager and with a purple face said, "Sack him now." How I got through with Shirley's microphone cable I will never know; the poor guy had been there for years. More later on the last Czar of the Palladium.



The front of the London Palladium in April 2013

In those days the Palladium did pantomime, which was twice daily at 2:45pm and 7:30pm. Sunday was TV and *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* with the fabulous Tiller Girls. The pantomime began on Boxing Day and finished on Easter Saturday. This was followed by six weeks of variety, twice nightly at 6:15pm and 8:45pm. The summer season normally began during June and lasted until September; performances were at 6:15pm and 8:45pm Monday to Saturday. TV moved to the ABC Blackpool, so the Palladium did various one-off shows on Sundays. When the summer show finished in September it was again followed by the same format as in the spring with six weeks of variety and the return of *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*. In December, the theatre closed for the huge get-in and setup for the pantomime.



After my initial six week variety finished and I had survived the beady eye of Eddy the stage first electrician, he recommended to Keith the Chief Engineer that I was OK. I did not know at the time, I was being carefully being watched for what was to follow. The Palladium in my days was run as a factory – it had to be because it was running 24/7 with days off and many full-time staff who were on overtime and also show men. You collected your clocking-in card from the Stage Door Keeper, clocked in and placed your card in the rack at the side of the clock. This was also a point where the various Heads of staff could check to see if you were on time.

Arriving one morning the Chief Keith was waiting for me by the clock-in point. He said that there was a new job he wanted me to do and to follow him. We went through the cast iron fire door that led from the stage area into the auditorium, through the foyer and up the grand staircase into the Royal Circle, along the back wall until we reached halfway, through a door marked Ladies Toilets, then through a door marked Private, along a corridor where he opened a door on the left leading into a room that looked a bit like the Tardis. There were two rooms with a glass partition running through the centre. This was the new hub of the theatre, which had cost thousands of pounds to install; all the stage sound and lighting was controlled from here. I was told to sit, observe and learn for the next three months, I was also informed I was now a Day Man, meaning full-time employment and the beginning of three enjoyable years I will never forget.

The control rooms were brand new, having been built into the rear wall of the Royal Circle. Behind this wall there was a vast area that once held the poster department, where up until the early 1960s a team of eight men had hand produced all the posters and advertising for the shows of the Moss Empire circuit. All the benches and equipment were still in situ – it all reminded me of Miss Havisham's house. Only one of the original staff members remained, who worked in a small corner painting one-off posters to be used for FOH or other emergencies. The control room had one-way viewing windows, which gave a clear view of the stage whilst patrons were not able to view into the room from the circle side. These viewing windows were an important aspect of the design as all lighting and sound cues in those days were visual for all productions. In the centre of the room on the right was the new computer lighting console, while the sound desk was located in the room opposite. The Palladium was the first theatre in Europe to install a computerised lighting system at that time. The whole design was installed by Rank Strand Electric and took 18 months to complete. There were literally miles of wiring, from the console to the adjoining relay room and onto the computer banks, which were situated in a large room constructed beneath the stage area. Ranks also supplied an engineer during all performances for six months after the installation was up and running and, as you can imagine, minor problems did occur during this period.



Me at the stage lighting control console in 1967. To my left is the edge of the soundproof stage viewing window. Top of picture, just see base of Bakelite three-way talkback system. Two rows of memory stops, 40 in total; these held the main lighting plots. To the right of these is the Strand Electric symbol manufacturer's disc. Below these are various drop tabs; the extreme right one was the DBO tab. The 15 buttons above the main control panel operated the main colour change motors.

I completed a three month trainee course as an operator at the lighting console and, although daunted at first by the complexity, at the end of the three months I passed and became a lighting technician console controller. As all cues were visual, a great deal of sensitivity was required in the changes and fading sequences. Although most main scenes were loaded into programmes there were times when you added to the programme manually. Also if a lamp or bank of lights malfunctioned during the performance you had to be ready to manually add alternative lighting.

I remember the telephone ringing one evening during the interval of an evening performance; it was the General Manager, David Wilmot informing me a member of the audience was complaining there was a smell of burning coming from the lighting boxes on the front of the circle. On investigation it was found that during the show a bank of relays had packed up, causing all the solenoids to burn out of the 20-colour change motors that were attached to each floodlight, so I had to continue the second half of the performance improvising the lighting. The acrid smell was still there next day. Five electricians spent the whole day replacing the solenoids while Rank's engineers repaired the relays. On one occasion I went down into the main electric intake room, which housed the main transformers, secondary lighting etc and was surprised to find all the large black rubber floor mats were inscribed GB. Apparently they were from the Gaumont British Cinema circuit.

Until the 1940s the **Palladium** was owned by General Theatre Corporation Ltd, the Managing Director being Mark Ostrer, one of the Ostrer Brothers, who at that time also controlled Gaumont Cinemas. Also during this period all productions were still under the direction of George Black, one of the Black Brothers who owned the Black's Regal Cinema Circuit in the North. Some years later I visited the (Black's Regal) Odeon Sunderland during October 1982. The building had been Black's flagship cinema and on the first floor was an old office area that had once been used by Black's directors for their group meetings. It all looked so sad – this massive building closed, dark, cold and damp, also at that time there was talk of demolition. I did manage to save several items, one being an Art Deco tub chair, one of five that were in the abandoned directors' office, I could only carry one in my car. I still use this today in my office.



The Regal Sunderland in 2006

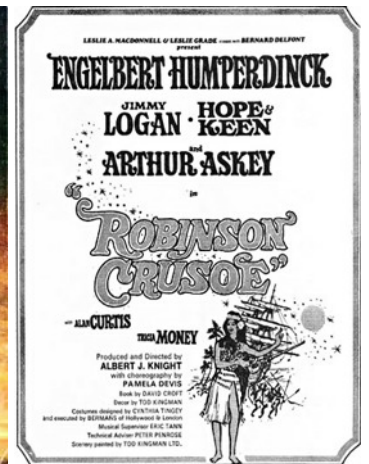
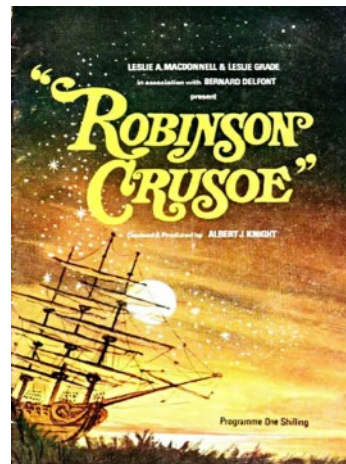
The **Palladium** had so many secret areas, one being the roof void. To change lamps in the downlighters that floodlit the stage apron and orchestra pit, there was a tiny trapdoor you had to squeeze through to gain access into the void. There was a rule that there always had to be two electricians for this maintenance job, one to hold the large torch and the other to carry the lamp to change. The whole area looked like a spider's web with a criss-cross of plaster dried sacking ties supporting Frank Matcham's decorative ornate ceiling to the main iron roof frame. You wended your way on your hands and knees on slim duck boarding, avoiding the ties, until you reached the front area above the stage and changed the lamp, emerging from the dust-caked void looking like Victorian chimney sweeps but greatly relieved that you had not put your foot through the plaster ceiling.

There was always rivalry and banter between the lighting control room and the lime box situated at the rear of the upper circle. There were three spot operators. The spots were huge, with carbon arc lamphouses; the carbon flame created the best light for the long throw to the stage. This domain was under the control of day man Peter. We had a three-way talkback system that connected the prompt corner, us in the control room and the lime box. If we in the control room or the lime box made a slip up we would make comments to the other, always finishing with the line, "You are on report." This was a reference to the Report Dockets, which were made out by the Stage Director each evening for Head Office. Mostly these were missed from the prompt corner, as side views of lighting mistakes were difficult to observe

unless it was a blackout, which did happen once. It was during a Summer Show. It was the last scene before the interval. I had a DBO (Direct Black Out) during a musical number, which just left the spots on. For some reason they went out as well and the whole stage was in darkness. I knew immediately there was a serious problem up in the box, my intercom was buzzing from the prompt corner, which I completely ignored whilst I was working out a gradual lighting solution by slowly fading in various coloured lights until I was ready to come in with the final lighting sequence closing the first half. I then waited. Keith came in during the interval. He said one of the spots had failed, caused by the carbons fusing. The operator panicked; the other operator went to help him and his spot did the same and there was no time to fire-up the other standby spots. As Keith left, he said, "Well done Ron." This was a huge compliment, coming from Keith, who gave any praise sparingly.

Many events happen when you least expect them. One morning I arrived and at the clocking-in point were four stage hands whispering. Graham was the lead day man for the stage, he looked at me and said, "Your Nemesis has gone." Then he told me Jack Matthews had died last night. I realized over the next few days how everyone was really affected by this. I myself over time came to respect him. Providing you were on time and gave it your best shot he was fine. He stood up for all the staff, especially during rehearsals. If there was going to be an over-run, he made sure the director knew it and there would be overtime to pay. I also found out then that the reason he wore white gloves; he had a bad skin complaint that was very painful.

My three years as a lighting operator was immensely rewarding for many reasons. The staff were great, the salary was very good with TV going out every Sunday and the stage productions had the best that was available for the capacity audiences of 4,500 a night¹. The two productions that I think were the best during my time working at the **Palladium**, perhaps because I remember the vast number of lighting cues, was my second summer show in 1967 *Doddy's Here Again*, with the Bluebell Girls and my third pantomime, *Robinson Crusoe* with Engelbert Humperdinck, Arthur Askey and Alan Curtis in 1967-1968.



My memories of *Robinson Crusoe* were the underwater scenes in Neptune's Kingdom that closed the first half and ran for twenty minutes. The first ten minutes was in UV. As there were no cues from the prompt corner, all cues relied on visual or music. The UV lighting effect being an important part of the scene, I had a note to switch all UV lighting on seven minutes before they were required. This was the warm-up time, otherwise the full effect would not be achieved. A gauze the width of the stage was dropped near the front, painted in UV paint with seaweed, shells etc. From behind this gauze a whole sequence took place of tiny fish darting around. Stage hands in black would go back and forth with various small boards with fish painted on a black background, moving the boards with great effect. Then there were dancers in costumes, representing angel fish, who glided across on Kirby Ballet wires², with floating gauze fins, followed by star fish who, when they spun round, disappeared as the reverse of their costume was black so did not activate under the UV. At the end of the UV sequences the front gauze was flown out leaving a murky stage. Gradually and slowly I faded in deep blues and green lighting transforming the stage rocks, caves and sea anemones, their individual flowers having

¹ Over two houses with 2,286 [today] seats each.

² At the end of the 19th Century George Kirby founded the first company dedicated to the art of performer flying. [www.afxuk.com]

tiny bulbs in them. Bathed in a deep pink light was a glittering oyster shell, which slowly opened revealing a white pearl that transformed into a ballet dancer who stepped forth, moving around the stage. As she did so lighting and music continued to build until the centre of the stage opened and slowly arose a giant pillared dais with King Neptune seated on a conch throne, holding a golden Trident and surrounded by Mermaids. As he stood and moved to the edge of the dais more sea creatures appeared from the wings. I remember there was a large octopus, which moved slowly down stage with all tentacles moving. The whole scene closed with the ballet dancer centre front stage, forming this remarkable tableau. The house tabs slowly closed, opened again and then closed. House lights!

My most memorable and favourite Palladium production during my three years at the stage lighting console was the Ken Dodd Summer show in 1967 *Doddy's Here Again*, with the Bluebell Girls. This was also their only UK appearance for a season in the UK and it was sold out during its entire run, with each performance also selling out all standing room tickets. Ken Dodd was hugely popular at that time with his recordings *Tears* and *Happiness* at the top of the Hit Parade. The Bluebell Girls from Paris sealed this successful show. This production had 153 lighting cues. I will never forget my first performance at the lighting console for this show, my hands were so wet with nerves I had a towel on my lap, so that I could keep drying them. During the dress rehearsal, Margaret Kelly (Miss Bluebell) herself had sat in the control room and gave each lighting direction and cue for the lighting plot for the eight main production numbers, she also returned each night for a week to tweak some of some of the lighting by adding or reducing various lighting colours.



Again the closing of the first half was to me the best of the eight routines and my favourite. *Autumn Concerto* was the music to which this scene was set. The two groups of Bel Canto Singers appeared either side of the apron stage to provide a choral backing. The Bluebells appeared on a vast glittering staircase that was the entire width of the stage. They were dressed in vivid pink ostrich feathers with diamanté coronets and an ostrich plume that gave each girl a height of 7ft. Each girl held two large matching pink feather fans. Their whole varied routine was lit in complex coloured lighting sequences, which added an amazing depth to the entire production. Miss Bluebell informed me that she had devised and developed this routine over a number of years and it was hugely popular in France and the States. As this routine came to a close and the house tabs began to slowly close, four huge chandeliers slowly lowered and my final cue for the first half was to slowly bring the lighting up on the chandeliers, which were only visible for thirty seconds – but what an ending. The entire audience stood applauding calling for more; however they did not get it. This was to be my long lasting memory of the Palladium and Variety Theatre.

Notes: Nine months after leaving the Palladium in 1969 I joined Rank as a Manager at the Odeon / Gaumont Palace Hammersmith. I was there for three years and hope to tell of my enjoyment and experiences during my time there. Keith (Chief Engineer) went on to become Chief Engineer of the newly-built Sydney Opera House. Les (Sound Engineer) went on to work at Glyndebourne Opera House. Tommy Hayes replaced Jack Matthews as Stage Director. David Wilmott (General Manager) retired and was replaced by Neil Brooks. Many other long-term staff left as *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* finished and ATV moved to Birmingham.



FLATPACK 10

19-24 APRIL 2016

Birmingham's one-of-a-kind film jamboree returns for its tenth edition. Events and screenings can be found across the city, including:

THE PROJECTIONISTS

A new exhibition by photographer Richard Nicholson, who has travelled the UK capturing beautifully detailed images of projectionists at work.

The show runs at the Gas Hall, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, throughout the festival. On **Sunday 24 April** you can also find a free day of celluloid activities in the space, including walks, talks, live silents and rare film gauges.

Full programme launches in March at:
www.flatpackfestival.org.uk

Presented in association with The Projection Project at the University of Warwick, with support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

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)

ABERDEEN

The Cineworld at Queens Links has applied for a licence so that patrons can take drinks into the auditoria. People can currently drink at the cinema's bar but cannot take drinks into the cinema itself. A number of conditions have been attached to the proposal, including a limit of three alcoholic drinks per customer. People buying tickets for films rated [U] [PG] and [12A] would only be able to drink after 6pm.

Press & Journal (Aberdeen) – 1 February

ANTRIM (Northern Ireland)

Councillors have backed plans to turn two screens of the Cineplex into a dental surgery and pharmacy. It is unclear from the report if the remaining two screens will still be devoted to cinema use. There is a ten-screen Omniplex across town. {26668}

Antrim Guardian – 24, 31 December

ASHFORD (Kent)

Plans to build a six-screen 900-seat cinema at Elswick Place have been granted permission. No operator has been named.

Ashford Herald – 23 December

AXBRIDGE (Somerset)

The 32-seat Roxy was opened in 2007 in part of a former coaching inn. Period cinema seats were acquired when Bristol's Colston Hall was renovated, and vintage fabric was deployed to create covers for the stools and chairs in the small bar area. Projection and sound equipment was partly purchased with a Big Lottery grant; volunteers staff the cinema. Their website [\[www.axbridgeroxy.org.uk\]](http://www.axbridgeroxy.org.uk) has some photos and a short video. {49373}

Weston Mercury – 4 February; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Anthony Wills

AYLESBURY (Bucks)



The old Odeon is to be demolished shortly and 49 retirement flats created in its place. It opened in June 1937 with 954 seats in the stalls and 497 in the circle. It was tripled in August 1973 but closed in October 1999 when a six-screen ABC [now Odeon] opened nearby.

Bucks Herald – 3 February; Bucks Advertiser – 5 February; photo taken February 2016 by Martin Tapsell

BALLYMENA (Co Antrim, Northern Ireland)

The seven-screen IMC multiplex has had one of its auditoria upgraded to a Galactic screen with Dolby Atmos sound. It is the only one of its kind in Northern Ireland. {26670}

Ballymena Guardian – 24 December

BANBRIDGE (Co Down, Northern Ireland)

Plans to build an eight-screen Omniplex cinema at The Outlet Retail Park have been delayed due to land purchase issues.

Banbridge Leader – 19 January

BARNSTAPLE (Devon)

The North Devon Leisure Centre could be sold off and cinema operators are being targeted by the Council owners. The building would be demolished and new facilities created.

North Devon Gazette – 6 January

BIRMINGHAM (Central)

Upmarket burger chain Byron is hoping to open a 206-seat restaurant in part of the former ABC New Street. The cinema closed in April 1983 and the stalls area and foyer were converted into an amusement arcade, which closed in 2013. Upper parts were converted into offices but it is believed the former circle area remains intact. The exterior is grade II listed. {9313}

Birmingham Mail – 5 February

BIRMINGHAM (Erdington)

Plans have been submitted to convert currently-vacant shop units at the Central Square Shopping Centre into a cinema. Erdington used to have a twelve-screen Showcase, which was demolished in May 2013 to allow expansion of the Land Rover factory. Also the 30-screen (6 currently mothballed) Vue at Star City is not far away.

Royal Sutton Coldfield Observer – 22 January

BLACKBURN (Lancs)



The former Apollo / Unit4 / Classic / Essoldo / Majestic is to be transformed into a restaurant, bar and performance space. It is housed in the Grade I listed Cotton Exchange of 1865, which became a cinema in 1918. It closed with five-screens in December 2005 when a new ten-screen Vue opened in the town and has been vacant since. {24035}

Lancashire Telegraph – 16, 28 January; sent in by Philip Compton; photo taken June 2005

BOLTON

The 123m tall giant crane that has been helping construct the new nine-screen Light cinema has been dismantled. Construction has been delayed by bad weather and the opening, originally scheduled for 18 March, has been put back to late May.

Bolton Journal – 7, 20 January, 6 February

BRADFORD (West Yorks)

Bradford Live is seeking alternative funding for the restoration of the New Victoria / Gaumont / Odeon after a £5m Lottery bid was rejected. Their plans can be seen in full at [\[tinyurl.com/gqk6z2t\]](http://tinyurl.com/gqk6z2t) but here is the summary.

Bradford Live's plan is to strip out the 1969 insertions and restore the main auditorium to its original size and shape. We know that most of the decoration in this area was removed in 1969, although those parts that remain will be kept. The well preserved ballroom and restaurant wing will be restored back to its original state. Other areas of the building will also, for the most part, be put back to their original forms and a new extension at the rear of the building will be built, to ensure that the venue has competitive facilities for the modern live touring industry. This area will include new dressing rooms, a loading dock and stage storage. The entire building will be served by new acoustic, electrical, heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting and fire control systems.

The new venue will be able to hold c3,500 in fully seated mode and c4,000-4,500 with stalls standing. The separate ballroom will hold (standing) c800. It will be run commercially by an operator, although the building itself would be held by the Bradford Live charity.

The venue will be a midsize one, similar in capacity to the Brixton Academy, the Hammersmith Apollo and Manchester Apollo. All of these venues are former super cinemas from the interwar years and each has found a successful new use in today's live entertainment market. They successfully bridge the gap between the arenas and the 1,500-2,000 'town hall' type venues, finding a good balance between intimacy and scale. We expect the Bradford venue to play the same role for the West Yorkshire Conurbation, as the other two venues have for their respective conurbations.

The Bradford Live team has deep experience in modern venue workings and design and will use this knowledge to ensure that the venue works aesthetically, acoustically, practically and, most importantly, commercially. The cost of creating such a venue will be significant but, we think, within reach using a combination of capitalised private sector revenue streams and grant funding.

Sent in by Carl Chesworth & John West; see also letters p31

BRIGHTON

Plans for flats to replace the grade II listed Astoria have been rejected because they were not of an acceptable standard, saying residents would suffer from a lack of natural light, privacy and excess noise. A new proposal could be submitted to use basically the same building as student accommodation. {1844}

The Argus (Brighton) – 28, 29 January; sent in by Barry Quinton

CAMPBELTOWN (Argyll & Bute)

Renovation of the category A listed Picture House is to begin soon, following the appointment of a building contractor. It will feature a 192-seat main screen, a second smaller auditorium, a new entrance foyer and café. It is expected to reopen in spring 2017.

Campbeltown Courier – 5 February; sent in by Carl Chesworth

CHELTENHAM (Glos)



The up-market restaurant in the former Daffodil closed suddenly at the beginning of February and the business went into liquidation. The building operated as a cinema from 1922 to 1977. A friend living locally says it is due to reopen in a few weeks 'under new management'. I was warmly received when I asked to take this picture. {35654}

Western Daily Press – 2 February; photo taken September 2013

CHESTER

Seven cinema operators have expressed an interest in a six-screen cinema planned for the proposed Northgate development. The short list has been whittled down to two but their identities are not being released. Plans have gone out for public consultation.

Chester Chronicle – 16 November, 3, 17 December

Construction of the £37m cultural centre RE:NEW has reached the halfway mark. It incorporates the former Odeon and will include a library, theatre and cinema.

Chester and District Standard – 11 February

CIRENCESTER (Glos)

In November 2014 planning permission was granted for a four-screen Everyman cinema at Brewery Court. Since then, nothing has happened. The new cinema will have a total of 387 seats and will include three auditoria with over 100 seats each and a smaller 36-seat screen. It is unlikely to be open before summer 2017.

Wilts & Glos Standard, Gloucestershire Independent – 21 January

CLYDEBANK (West Dunbarton)



The ten-screen Empire (ex UCI) has been granted an alcoholic drinks licence. The vote was split, two for and two against with the chairman using his casting vote. An opponent said it "would allow the sale of alcohol in darkened rooms where children would be present." A spokesman for the cinema said that all other multiplexes in the West of Scotland were licensed. {26988}

Clydebank Post – 23 December; photo taken September 2008

COLCHESTER (Essex)



The Wetherspoon's pub in the former Playhouse celebrated its 21st birthday last December. The building opened as a theatre in March 1929 with 1,150 seats on three levels and a fully-equipped stage. It was converted to a cinema in September 1930 and altered in 1935 to remove the gallery. It was modernised in 1962, reducing the capacity to 963 and it reopened as the ABC in October that year. Films ceased in August 1981 and became bingo, which closed in 1993. The Wetherspoon's conversion has retained much of the features.

Wetherspoon News – winter; sent in by Nina Williams; photo taken April 2009

At their December meeting (see p21 last Bulletin) the Council backed plans for a multiplex at Tollgate Village. Plans for a rival scheme at the Northern Gateway went on show to the public in January. A developer who had an application to build homes elsewhere turned down has accused the Council of acting unlawfully regarding the granting of permission for the twelve-screen Cineworld at the Northern Gateway.

Daily Gazette – 21 December, 12, 22 January;

Essex County Standard – 15, 22 January; East Anglian Daily Times – 21 January

CORK (Ireland)

The Capitol has been demolished to make way for a €50m retail and office development. The development will be called The Capitol, taking its name from the former cinema, which closed in December 2005. It opened at Easter 1947 with 1,300 seats and was later twinned. The newspaper website at [tinyurl.com/z597vuh] contains some photos and a short video.

Evening Echo – 26 January; Irish Examiner – 29 January

DERBY

The Council has said that a four star hotel could be built as part of an entertainment development to replace the Assembly Rooms. The venue was badly damaged by fire in 2014.

Derby Telegraph – 19 November, 23 January; sent in by Peter Good

DUDLEY

Dudley Council has been called 'inept' after it emerged bosses do not know how much a plan to demolish the Hippodrome and replace it with an open space would cost. They are keen to have the building removed "at the earliest opportunity" and want to end discussions with groups seeking to form a rescue package. Campaigners have vowed to do all they can to save the building and have been given until the end of February to address the Council's concerns. {41631}

Express & Star – 29 December, 3 February; sent in by Ivan Harris

DUNGANNON (Co Tyrone, Northern Ireland)

Omniplex is to move into the former Global Cinema at the Oaks Centre, which was vacated by the previous operator in November 2014 when they went into receivership. The six screens will be given a complete overhaul and maybe another screen or two will be added. Opening was scheduled for the end of February.

Tyrone Courier – 16 December

EDINBURGH

The former Odeon in Clerk Street could be showing movies again by the end of this year! The venue has been bought by the G1 group, who will see four new screens installed, with 400, 140, 140 and 50 seats. A café and bar are included in the plans. Work will see some of the old features restored, including the terrazzo flooring in the foyer. {22117}

Edinburgh Evening News – 5 February

EGREMONT (Cumbria)

Developers wanting to build houses on the site of the former Castle have agreed to tidy up the site and erect fencing. Work is due to start in 12-18 months' time. The cinema opened in 1922 and closed in 1972 in favour of bingo and then snooker. It lay empty for several years before being demolished in 2004. {50897}

Whitehaven News – 14 January

EVESHAM (Worcs)

Plans have been unveiled to add to extra screens to the Regal by building another storey on the roof. The project will cost £600,000 and fundraising events are being held to raise the last £50,000. The grade II listed cinema was rescued in January 2012 and now has seating for 306 in the circle and at tables in the stalls. The CTA visited in September that year. See Casework p6. {13074}

Evesham Observer – 15 January; Evesham Journal – 21 January

EXETER (Devon)

Outline planning permission has been granted for a development at the coach station. It will include a new multiplex cinema and is due for completion in mid-2019. Exeter already has a two-screen Picture House, a four-screen Odeon and a seven-screen Vue.

Western Morning News – 22 January

EXMOUTH (Devon)

An un-named operator has expressed an interest in opening a multi-screen cinema at Queens Drive. The town already has the three-screen Savoy.

Exmouth Journal – 11 February

FORDINGBRIDGE (Hants)



An application to demolish the former Regal and build housing was rejected by the Council. It opened in 1933 with 290 seats. It closed in 1965 and became a pottery, which closed in 2012. It has now been bought by a local electronics company, who want to reopen it as a 30-seat cinema and bar and incorporate apartments for their staff. [www.theregalcinema.org] {37771}

Sent in by Philip Stevens; photo taken March 2009

FORT WILLIAM / GHEARSDAN (Highland)

Plans are underway to set up a new group to look at the possibility of a community cinema. There is already an empty two-screen cinema in the town.

Lochaber News – 11 February

GLASGOW (Central)

The eighteen-screen Cineworld in Renfrew Street has been bought by a property trust in a £30m deal. The operation of the cinema is unaffected as it has a long lease on the building. {27079}

Glasgow Evening Times – 7 January

GRIMSBY (Lincs)

Talks are ongoing with a cinema operator aiming to bring a ten-screen cinema to spare land at Riverhead, formerly occupied by the bus station.

Grimsby Telegraph – 21 January, 11 February

GUILDFORD (Surrey)

Curzon cinemas has put in a bid to take over the lease of the Electric Theatre. See p23 last Bulletin.

Surrey Advertiser – 5 February

HASTINGS (East Sussex)

An arthouse cinema could be incorporated in the development of the Observer building in Cambridge Street. However, there is concern from local residents about the height of the proposed scheme – five additional storeys.

Hastings & St Leonards Observer – 12 February

HEBDEN BRIDGE (West Yorks)

The Picture House is one of the buildings affected by the Christmas flooding. Volunteers have unbolted the 257 seats in the stalls to facilitate repairs. Only the circle can be used at the moment, reducing the capacity to 230 and restricting disabled access; heating is also limited. Patrons are being asked to bring "cushions, blankets and their goodwill." See also the entry for Rochdale below. See photo front cover Bulletin 49/6. {2434}

Yorkshire Post – 1 January

HINCKLEY (Leics)

The foyer of the former Regent is to be converted into a vintage tea shop and wine bar. The teashop will open in March and the wine bar at a later date. The auditorium was demolished in May 2014 after bingo closed in June 2013. {14983}

Hinckley Times – 20 January

HULL (East Yorks)



The former Priory is to become a branch of a discount food retailer; opening is scheduled for April. The cinema opened in October 1938 and films ceased in February 1959. It was converted into a supermarket, latterly operating as Kwik Save, which closed in February 2007. Various businesses have used the building since; a gym still operates upstairs. {44998}

Hull Daily Mail – 3 February; photo taken February 2008

ILKLEY (West Yorks)

The new 56-seat Ilkley Cinema opened on 12 November in a former Co-op store. It claims to be the world's smallest 4k digital cinema. It has comfortable seating, including sofas and tables. There is a gallery of photos on the Wharfedale Observer website at: [tinyurl.com/zkehjyc]. [www.ilkleycinema.co.uk] {50929}

Wharfedale Observer – 10 December

LEEDS (West Yorks)

Plans have been passed for a twelve-screen 1,200-seat multiplex at Thorpe Park. Cinema operators are said to be already vying for operating rights.

Yorkshire Post – 13 January; *Yorkshire Evening Post* – 15 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth

LEWES (East Sussex)

The new three-screen Depot cinema currently being built on the site of the former Harvey's Depot is using specially designed bricks, constructed with internal chambers to meet the needs of nesting birds and bats. [www.lewesdepot.org]

The Argus (Brighton) – 4 February; sent in by Barry Quinton

LLANDUDNO (Conwy)

Plans to reopen the nightclub in the former Grand Theatre have been delayed as the Seaside Buildings Preservation Trust has been offered the opportunity to buy the building. A decision was required by the end of January. Conversion plans were drawn up after MBI Consulting bought the building last March. See p20 Bulletin 49/4 & p26 Bulletin 49/1. {25528}

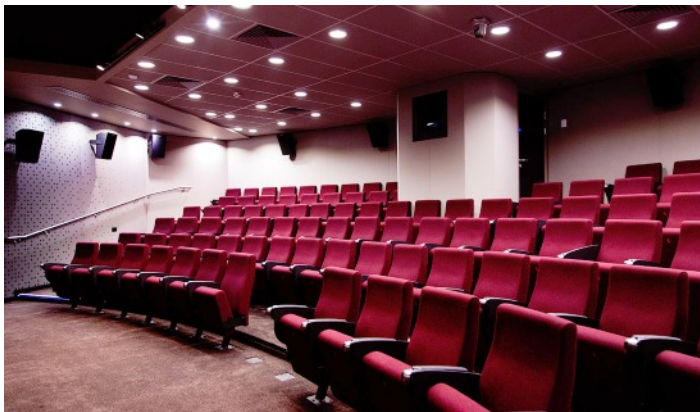
Daily Post (Wales) – 12 December; sent in by Nina Williams

LONDON (Islington)

Odeon is to open a luxury fine dining cinema with at-seat waiter service at the Islington Square development in late 2017. Odeon Lounge will serve three-course meals and fine wines. There will be six screens with up to 40 reclining leather seats offering double the legroom of a normal cinema. The first Odeon Lounge cinema opened at Whiteleys in 2012.

Screen Daily – 10 February; sent in by Carl Chesworth

LONDON (New Cross)



The 101-seat Curzon Goldsmiths was scheduled to open on 29 January. It has 4k digital projection and Dolby 7.1 sound. It is situated in the Richard Hoggart Building on the Goldsmiths Campus of the University of London. It is open to the public at evenings and weekends. [www.curzongoldsmiths.com] {51559}

Evening Standard – 7 January; *Lewisham Mercury* – 13 January

LONDON (Orpington)

A new seven-screen 961-seat Odeon was scheduled to open on 26 February. The largest auditorium seats 281 and features an ISENSE screen and a Dolby Atmos sound system. The town's last cinema, the Commodore (EMI) closed in May 1982 and was demolished in June 1983.

Bromley Times – 7, 28 January; sent in by Peter Chester, Janet Digby & Philip Stevens

LONDON (Upper Norwood)

The Kingsway International Christian Centre [KICC] has lodged an appeal against refusal of planning permission to turn the former Rialto/Granada into a place of worship. The KICC owns the building and has spent millions on refurbishment. According to locals a large screen has been fitted and posters for small film events have been seen outside. KICC says that the building would be used for worship for a maximum of two days a week and would be available for community and leisure use for the remaining time. {28989}

Croydon Advertiser – 13 February

LOUGHBOROUGH (Leics)

The opening date for the new eight-screen 1,118-seat Cineworld has been put back. It was originally scheduled for Easter but is not now likely to open before late May.

Loughborough Echo – 27 January

LUTON (Beds)



The grade II listed former Odeon was used for filming part of a BBC programme *The People's History of Pop*; The Beatles played there in September 1963. It opened in October 1938 with 1,332 seats in the stalls and 626 in the circle. It was tripled in November 1974 and closed in June 1983. It was de-tripled and converted into a bingo club, which closed in January 1999. It reopened as a church in February 2001 and remains so today. The newspaper photos show bingo tables remaining in the circle area. {22391}

Herald & Post – 4 February; sent in by Margaret Burgoine; photo taken April 2004

MACCLESFIELD (Cheshire)

New plans have been unveiled for a six-screen cinema to open in 2018. This follows the collapse last year of a scheme in Silk Street after ten years of planning. No operator has been mentioned.

Macclesfield Express – 10 February

MUMBLES/MWMBWLS (Swansea)

Structural defects meant that the façade of the former Tivoli had to be demolished by contractors building a new restaurant and shopping centre. It will be reinstated as it was originally. See p18 Bulletin 49/6. {22955}

Western Mail – 29 January

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

The Tyneside Cinema is to submit a planning application to add a canopy of decorative lights along the side elevation and a change of use from highway to pavement café. {22729}

The Journal (Newcastle) – 27 January

NEWLYN (Cornwall)

The two-screen Newlyn Filmhouse was due to open on 19 February in the former Turners' Fish Merchants building. The two screens have 86 and 56 seats and there is a café/bar. The CTA viewed the exterior of the building before conversion on the Cornwall visit in September 2013. Photos of the conversion at:

[www.facebook.com/NewlynFilmhouse]

The Cornishman – 4 February

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NORTHAMPTON



The Church that has occupied the former Ritz for the last 36 years has moved out. They say the building has come to the end of its useful life and it is likely to be demolished and a new place of worship created, possibly with shops and housing. The cinema opened in September 1937 with 728 seats on a single level. Films ceased in October 1962; bingo was tried for a short while and then the building was used as offices before the church moved in. {40825}

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 9 February; sent in by Paul Bland [photo]

OMAGH (Co Tyrone, Northern Ireland)

Omniplex say they are committed to the development of an eight-screen cinema on a derelict site once occupied by Desmond's Factory. This news comes after IMC bought the existing cinema in the town; see p26 last Bulletin.

Ulster Herald – 17 December

OSWESTRY (Shropshire)

Cineworld has pulled out of operating a multiplex at the Smithfield site. The Council is still hopeful of attracting another operator to the town but not necessarily in this development. The owners of the independent 79-seat Kinoculture have said they doubt the local area could support such a venture.

Oswestry & Border Chronicle – 5, 21 January; Shropshire Star – 4, 6 February; sent in by Carl Chesworth & John Powell

OXFORD

Disagreements between the developer and the Council mean that plans for the revamp of Gloucester Green have stalled. The Council is now considering other options for the part of Gloucester Green it still owns, including the Odeon [ex ABC] in George Street. {22679}

Oxford Mail – 18 January

PENRITH (Cumbria)

The Alhambra will be getting a third screen if the Council grant planning permission. The plans involve conversion of a former shop between the cinema and the Tourist Information Centre into a 36-seat screen. {23497}

Cumberland & Westmorland Herald – 6 February

PERTH



A proposed City centre regeneration project at Thimblerow includes a multiplex cinema. The developers say that the new cinema and the existing seven-screen Playhouse could co-exist. The owners of the Playhouse have commissioned an extensive study to establish the full impact of the planned complex.

Dundee Courier – 18 January; photo taken September 2009; sent in by Carl Chesworth

PETERBOROUGH (Cambs)

The developer behind a scheme in North Westgate has gone to the High Court in a bid to overturn planning approval for a rival project at Queensgate. Both schemes include a multiplex cinema. See p19 Bulletin 49/6.

Evening Telegraph (Peterborough) – 21 January

PORTHMADOG (Gwynedd)

Scaffolding has gone up around the Coliseum and demolition is about to start; the site will be used for industrial purposes. A listing proposal was rejected. {26641}

Daily Post (Wales) – 8 February

PRESCOT (Lancs)

The former Picture Palace is up for sale for £500,000. It opened in 1912 and closed in the 1950s. It was then used for bingo, a furniture warehouse and several other uses. A Church bought it in the late 1990s but now is seeking smaller premises. The Church used the cinema seats as pews and found an original programme from 1915 under the floorboards. The *Liverpool Echo* website has a gallery of photos at [tinyurl.com/h67eky4] and the Estate Agents' particulars can be seen on Zoopla at [tinyurl.com/zv5uwrn]. {51658}

Liverpool Echo – 28, 31 December

PRESTON (Lancs)



The ten-screen Odeon [ex UCI] at Riversway has been sold for £10.2m. The operation of the business is unaffected. {25250}

The Independent – 26 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth; photo taken September 2003

PWLLHELI (Gwynedd)



The 354-seat Neuadd Dwyfor (Town Hall Cinema) remains under threat due to Council funding cuts. A petition to save the cinema has already attracted over 3,000 signatures. {26642}

Daily Post (Wales) – 10 February; Cambrian News – 11 February; photo taken February 1999

RAMSGATE (Kent)

It is believed the Kings Theatre has been sold. The current tenants handed over their keys in January but the new owners were not listed on the Land Registry. It opened in November 1910 and films ceased in November 1982. It had recently been used as a church. {32919}

Isle of Thanet Gazette – 15 January; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

JD Wetherspoon has quashed rumours that it is to pull out of plans to convert the grade II listed Royal Victoria Pavilion into a pub. They propose to spend £1.5m renovating the property and include refitting some of the original features. {43938}

Isle of Thanet Gazette – 5 February; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

RAWTENSTALL (Lancs)



The former Picture House was due to be auctioned on 25 February with a guide price of £250,000. It opened in December 1920 and was tripled in 1975. Further changes of operator followed and films finally ceased in 1996. It was converted into an indoor market and snooker club. {43550}

Lancashire Telegraph – 4 February; photo taken June 2005

REDCAR (Cleveland)



The Regent is to receive part of a £2m grant from the Council's Boroughwide Public Realm Programme for improvements. {5304}

Northern Echo – 30 December; photo taken June 2006

ROCHDALE



The Wetherspoons pub in the former Regal was completely flooded on Boxing Day. There was a total loss of power and flood water, including raw sewage, in all areas of the pub. All flooring has been removed to see how much damage has been caused. It is currently closed for at least three months for refurbishment and no reopening date has been given. See also the entry for Hebden Bridge above. {3340}

Rochdale online – 2 January

SALFORD

The former UGC eight-screen multiplex at Salford Quays has been demolished; it was the UK's second multiplex. It was planned by ABC but by the time it opened in December 1986 it had become Cannon. It later became the MGM, then Virgin and finally UGC. It closed in March 2001 and has been boarded up since. There are plans to build offices and flats on the site. See p22 Bulletin 49/2. {25895}

Manchester Evening News – 19 January; sent in by Nick Taylor

SANDOWN (Isle of Wight)

Permission has been granted to demolish the former Rivoli. A crowd funding campaign to save it raised £140,000; now the money has to be handed back but most donors have asked that it be passed on to charitable causes. See Casework p6. {40200}

Isle of Wight County Press – 1 January

SCARBOROUGH (North Yorks)

The Futurist looks set to be finally demolished after a third appeal to make the venue a listed building was rejected.

The Stage – 14 January; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

The Moonlight drive-in cinema has to find a new location due to noise complaints. The Council has said it will help find an alternative site.

Scarborough News – 28 January; sent in by Terry Ladlow

Work has started to clear the site of the former Military Adventure Park at North Bay in preparation for the construction of a new multiplex. No size or operator were mentioned in the report.

Scarborough News – 11 February

SEVENOAKS (Kent)

The two cinema screens at the Stag Theatre (ex Odeon) have reopened after a £100,000 refurbishment. The seats have been replaced, following new projectors and servers that were installed last year. {25297}

Sevenoaks Chronicle – 28 January

SHEFFIELD

The twenty-screen Cineworld at Valley Centertainment is offering the company's first premium VIP experience in the UK. The £29 ticket price includes an all-you-can-eat buffet in a private lounge before the film in one of two 40-seat VIP screens. It also includes unlimited soft drinks and favourite cinema snacks to take into the auditorium. There are electric reclining leather seats, each with its own swivel tray. The cinema is one of the top three footfall cinemas in the country. It recently opened a 4DX screen and an IMAX auditorium. The company plans to roll out the concept to other cinemas.

Sheffield Star – 12 January; *Daily Mirror* – 13 January; sent in by Barry Quinton & Stuart Smith

SITTINGBOURNE (Kent)

After months of negotiation it has been revealed that Light Cinemas will be the operator of the planned new seven-screen multiplex. Planning permission was granted in March last year. Building work is expected to start this autumn.

Sittingbourne News Extra – 22 December, 27 January

STOKE-ON-TRENT (Staffs)

Locals are asking for assurances that a nightclub will not be part of the redevelopment of the Odeon site at Festival Park. They say that the original planning consent prohibits such use of any part of the building. The redevelopment plans were approved by the Council. Three new restaurants will open, resulting in a loss of three of the cinema's smaller screens and 24 car parking spaces.

Sentinel – 30 December, 11 February; sent in by Carl Chesworth

STOURBRIDGE (Dudley)

The former Savoy/ABC is on the market for £600,000 with another new agent. It opened in October 1920 and closed in November 1982. It has since been used as a supermarket, a health club and a 'gentleman's club' but has been heavily altered internally. See p23 Bulletin 49/4. {28388}

Express & Star – 26 December; sent in by Ivan Harris

STOWMARKET (Suffolk)

The 234-seat Regal saw record admissions in 2015 for the second year running. There were 63,394 admissions, an increase of 6,732 on the record set in 2014. December was the busiest month with 7,486 tickets sold. This year [2016] will be the cinema's 80th anniversary; they kicked off the celebrations with a special screening of *Dad's Army*. The Council owners are planning a refurbishment and expansion in 2017. [www.regalstowmarket.co.uk] {6241}

East Anglian Daily Times – 4 January, 6 February

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON (Warks)

Construction was due to start in late January on the Town Square development. It is to include a four-screen Everyman cinema. Opening is planned for spring 2017.

Stratford-upon-Avon Herald – 14 January; *Coventry Telegraph* – 22 January

TIVERTON (Devon)

The website of the Tivoli was hacked in December and the home page altered. The management quickly took action and assured customers that no personal data had been compromised and their equipment was not at risk. {20863}

Tiverton Gazette – 22 December

TUNBRIDGE WELLS (Kent)

Plans for a new hotel on the site of the Ritz/ABC [etc] have fallen through and the site is going back on the market. A new scheme has been unveiled to redevelop the site. It incorporates shops, offices and a three-screen cinema. The new cinema will have to be built in a different place to the former cinema due to a restrictive covenant. Meanwhile, 90% of visitors to a public exhibition of plans for a new cinema at Royal Victoria Place gave the scheme the thumbs up.

Kent & Sussex Courier – 15 January, 5, 12 February

WAKEFIELD (WEST YORKS)

There has been a delay in the plans to convert the former market into a cinema. A planning application was expected six months ago but has not yet been submitted.

Wakefield Express – 16 October

WALSALL

The new eight-screen 1,200-seat **Light** cinema is due to open on 18 March. It is **Light**'s fourth UK cinema. The largest screen has 268 seats.

Express & Star – 9 February; Walsall Chronicle – 11 February; sent in by Ivan Harris

WATFORD (Herts)

I passed the site of the former **Essoldo** on 9 February and saw that it had been completely demolished. {11698}

Sent in by John Pilblad

WELLINGTON (Shropshire)

The group campaigning to save the former **Clifton** are trying to find out the new owners' intentions for the building. Contracts were reportedly exchanged in July last year but according to the Land Registry, **Dunelm** still owns the building, which was last used as one of their stores. The campaign group has halted their selling of shares although they have raised £31,000 so far. {37745}

Shropshire Star – 6 January

WELLS (Somerset)



The Film Centre has received a special plaque from the City's Civic Society. It opened in January 1993 in a former boys' club as a single screen seating 150. A second screen seating 60 was added in 1999. Since then a third screen has been added, with the screens now seating 116, 113 and 82. {25821}

Wells Journal – 17 February; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken August 2003

WEST BROMWICH (Sandwell & Dudley)

Strong interest has been expressed in the sale of the former **Kings** cinema – see p28 last Bulletin. However, Estate Agents believe that the £2.2m price tag is likely to prevent a quick sale.

Express & Star – 7 January; Sandwell Chronicle – 14 January; sent in by Ivan Harris

WORTHING (West Sussex)

The Council-owned **Connaught Studio**, next door to the **Connaught Theatre**, will soon have its refurbishment completed after external funding required to do the work was reached. By June 2016 the renovation of the Edwardian plasterwork will be finished, the auditorium will be completely redecorated and new raked seating will be installed (at the moment the 240-seat venue has seating all on one level). A bar will also be installed for the **Studio** providing alcoholic and soft drinks as well as bar snacks. The **Studio** mostly shows films but also hosts small theatre productions.

Worthing Theatres Spring/Summer 2016 brochure; sent in by Mike Whitcombe

YATE (Glos)

The first restaurants have opened at the Riverside development. A six-screen **Cineworld** is due to open there at Easter.

Gloucestershire Gazette – 19 November

Late News

LONDON (Hammersmith)

The four-screen **Cineworld** has announced it will close in mid-April as the landlord has given them notice. The site is part of the King Street Regeneration scheme. It opened as the **Regal** in September 1936 with 1,283 seats in the stalls and 974 in the circle. It became the **ABC** in 1964 and was tripled in 1975. The upstairs screen was later split in two. **Cineworld** have operated the venue for the last twenty years. {3773}

Cineworld communication to patrons – 24 February; sent in by Tony Duggan

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [tinyurl.com/zrmsot] A page from the *Daily Record* entitled: A Nostalgic Look at Scotland's art deco cinemas.
- ★ [www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-35411477] A 3¾ minute film on the Mundin family, who operate the **Ritz Belper**, the **Regal Melton** and the **Savoy Heaton Moor**. *Sent in by Philip Stevens*
- ★ [www.firebox.com/product/7391] The **Cardboard Home Cinema**; only £24.99. Turn your tablet or smartphone into a cinema. You have to see this page to believe it! *Sent in by Martin Tapsell*
- ★ [www.picturethepast.org.uk] A not-for-profit website containing over 100,000 historical images covering Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. A search for "cinema" brought up 520 entries. Copies of the photos can be bought for a small fee. See p16.
- ★ [www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/213377] The **East Anglian Film Archive**; this one is for the modernisation of the **ABC Regent Norwich**. Check at the bottom of the page for others, such as the **Electric Palace Harwich**, how a variety of East Anglian cinemas coped with the new ITV, old adverts, children's matinées and the demolition of the **Norvic Norwich**. *Sent in by Richard Jones*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/hn56cd9] A page on the **Zimbo** website – 20 things you didn't know about *The Sound of Music*. See p28.
- ★ [player.bfi.org.uk/britain-on-film] Thousands of films covering 120 years of British life. Try [tinyurl.com/jtwmpbb] an 8-minute amateur film of a weekend in West Norwood, showing the now-demolished **Regal**. *Sent in by Robert Holden*
- ★ [www.facebook.com/cinematheatreuk] The Facebook page of the British Cinema and Theatre History community.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/hdkx7q2] A December 2013 report from **Rochdale Council** on Commemorating **Gracie Fields** covers the proposed siting of a plaque and statue in the town centre.
- ★ [rochdale-past.co.uk/rialto-cinema-rochdale] A page about the **Rialto/Odeon Rochdale** with a nice picture of the façade and some of its demolition. {51622}
- ★ [vimeo.com/142672113] *Film is Fragile* – a 1½ minute video from the **BFI** supporting the organization and its mission to protect the national film archive.

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MISCELLANY

THE NIGHT THE VON TRAPPS MET THEIR MATCH



Surely, it could only happen on Alderney – a night at the cinema that turns out to be a rollicking, clamorous shindig. The occasion was the showing of the sing-along version of *The Sound of Music*, marking the 50th anniversary of the film. Climbing every mountain, the chorus of local voices rose to the occasion, some literally.

Half the audience, bolstered by a few drinks, had turned up in costume. There was a group of four who came as brown paper packages tied up with string, who jumped up and went crazy every time the line was sung. A collector of wartime memorabilia left his German Kommandant's car at home but turned up in lederhosen complete with braces and a feather in his hat. There was a woman in a white dress with a blue sash (another song line) and a youngster came as a cuckoo clock. There were also naughty nuns and Austrian lasses.

Halfway through there was an intermission (or entr'acte) so short that when the story resumed someone had to go across to *The Georgian* to get people back, clutching their drinks. Then the DVD stopped playing! What a hoot! A Guernsey States member, who is a frequent visitor to these shores, got up and did a little dance, which was funny because he appeared to be in danger of losing his trousers. The projectionist had left to go and drive a taxi so he had to be phoned to get him back to restart the DVD. But the audience did not mind a bit. They were boisterously entertaining themselves.

Sent in by Roy E Heaven, who adds: "Quirky cinema at its best. In Alderney, this sort of thing is par for the course. Where else would you buy lottery tickets from the fishmonger?"

Reprinted from The Alderney Press by kind permission of Peter Annereau, who adds: "It speaks volumes about the type of place Alderney is. I doubt if such things happen elsewhere."

NATIVITY FILM BANNED

We reported on p19 of the last Bulletin that an advertisement featuring the Lord's Prayer had been banned from cinemas by advertising firm Digital Cinema Media [DCM]. It has now emerged that the same outfit also banned a 45-second film featuring a Nativity scene, made by an alliance of churches for a Christmas campaign.

Daily Telegraph – 23 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth

SINGIN' IN THE RAIN?

British scientists are trying to broaden the appeal of films and television by stimulating our senses of touch, taste and smell. A team from the University of Sussex hope to recreate the sensation of falling raindrops using mid-air 'haptic' devices. These create tactile sensations by projecting patterns of ultrasound beams onto the hands. If carefully programmed, the devices are able to simulate the feel of different shapes. The project has been dubbed "Feelyvision".

The Times – 10 February

REEL ALE



A new beer, the copper-coloured 'Reel Ale' (5.0% ABV) has been brewed by the Newark based Milestone Brewing Co especially for the Wetherspoons pub in the former Ritz in Lincoln. {25899}

Wetherspoon News – January; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Nina Williams; photo taken September 2003

TOP GUN HOME FOR SALE

Hollywood star Tom Cruise is selling his home near East Grinstead for £4.95m. The 11,331 sq ft home lies in 14.2 acres of grounds and has six bedrooms, eight bathrooms, a 900 sq ft living room and a 33-foot-long master bedroom with a balcony. The estate also includes a tennis court, outdoor swimming pool, cinema, hot tub and dance studio. The estate agents describe it as "most desirable and ideal for commuters and those who enjoy entertaining."

The Argus (Brighton) – 29 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

BBC PLUG FOR OUR ARCHIVE



The CTA got a really good credit on BBC1's *The One Show* on Friday 15 January when they used an image from the Archive in a report on David Bowie. It's an image of Bonnyrigg Regal [above].

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

EXPLETIVE CAMPAIGN

The Curzon [ex Columbia] in Shaftesbury Avenue has launched a 90-second expletive-filled film as part of its campaign against demolition for the Crossrail 2 project. It can be seen (be aware of the very strong language) at www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAWxlb1pVjE.

West end Extra – 8 January; sent in by Keith Bye & Carl Chesworth

ACID ATTACK IN CINEMA CAR PARK

A cinema-goer had acid thrown in his face after an argument broke out during a screening of *Straight Outta Compton* at the Cineworld in Crawley. A 27-year-old man is in hospital with life-changing injuries.

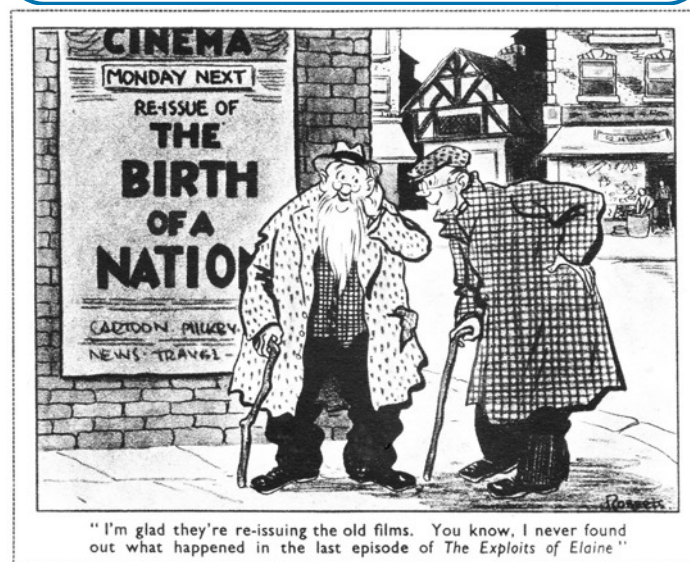
The Argus (Brighton) – 3 September; sent in by Barry Quinton

CORNISH FILM SOCIETY

The Penwith Film Society is appealing to the public to "use or lose" the cinema showings they provide. It has been running for 20 years and is working with Merlin Cinemas at the Royal in St Ives and the Savoy in Penzance. www.penwithfilmsociety.co.uk

The Cornishman – 12 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth

CARTOON CORNER



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

LETTERS

MIDDLESEX CINEMAS

Here is a copy of a letter I sent to the *Uxbridge Gazette*.

So South Ruislip is to get a new cinema! I thought it might be opportune to remember that Ruislip had a new cinema in 1929, the Rivoli and a second one in 1934, the Astoria, later the Embassy. Sadly the Rivoli closed in 1966 and the Embassy in 1980. At the times I wrote to the *Gazette* on both of these occasions lamenting their going, having spent many happy hours in these establishments, now sadly replaced by ugly buildings. I remember the atmosphere of our 'locals' with their individual designs and internal décor and curtains, which always leant a theatrical feel to the programme. They were not large Super Cinemas but they had a really homely feel. The staff wore scarlet uniforms with gold braid and Mr Waterworth, the manager at the Astoria and Embassy always looked smart in a dark suit and often a bow tie, unlike the awful black outfits they wear now at the Odeon multiplex in Uxbridge, which I never go to. The multiplex cinemas have no atmosphere and the prices of the snacks and so-called meals are exorbitant. Fortunately we still have reminders of those glamorous cinema days gone by with some buildings still remaining but sadly put to other uses; for example, the Regal Uxbridge, Savoy Hayes and Odeon Rayners Lane, a prime example of 1930s art deco. We won't be leaving future generations such treasures of cinema architecture.

My cousin Ron Wescott was a manager on the Granada circuit at Willesden, Slough and finally Harrow. I wonder if anyone is around now who may have worked with him? When they first put stereo in at Harrow we saw *The Guns of Navarone* there and went into the box. He kept on saying, "Don't touch anything!" My grandfather in the US put money into his local cinema. He was also keen on 'the movies' as was my uncle (his son) and my mum; so I seem to have inherited the film habit. I was told the first film I was taken to was *A Day at the Races* at the old Langham Pinner, where now stands a supermarket but that's par for the course.

Tim Leman

LIVERPOOL DERBY



Page 23 of the last Bulletin depicted the former Derby cinema on Scotland Road, Everton in Liverpool. Here is a photograph of the same cinema as it looks at present. I took this early in 2015 and it shows the cladding removed. The name of the cinema can just be seen above the blue panel.

Mike Taylor

NORTH YORKSHIRE IS MOVED TO CANADA

An amusing big mistake in the Culture Supplement in the *Yorkshire Post* on 8 January. They included a half-column section of films being screened at the Landmark Cinema in Whitby – I'd never heard of it before. It even boasted an IMAX screen. I realised pretty quickly, even before the IMAX screen that a big mistake had been made. So if someone really wanted to see *Star Wars* in IMAX 3D at the Whitby Landmark cinema, then they'd need to get their passport sorted and get on plane to Canada! I'd better check some of the other listings in the *Yorkshire Post* now. Is the City Screen in York now reopened after the flooding closed it? Yes, it is.

Terry Ladlow

STANFORD HALL CINEMA



There are some excellent photos of the interior of Stanford Hall on the Urban Explorers' site 28 days later at tinyurl.com/h9awvwz.

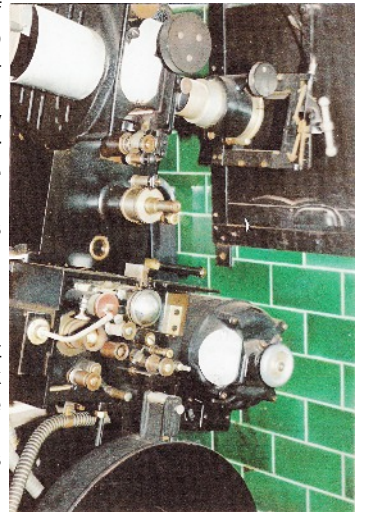
Richard Jones

I can remember going to Stanford Hall sometime in the 1980s or 1990s to see *The Wizard of Oz* on the big screen, an experience marred only by the film coming to an unnatural break midway through its running time. I can't recall if this was to allow the projector to cool down or to provide an opportunity to sell drinks and ice cream; I suspect the latter. Incidentally Miranda Rijks's biography of her grandfather, Sir Julian Cahn (*The eccentric entrepreneur...* Stroud: The History Press, 2008) provides some background to the creation of Stanford Hall's theatre.

Terry Hanstock

Further to the article in the last Bulletin, here [R] is a photo I took on the CTA visit in July 1990. The projectors were Gaumont British and you will see in front of the lens the 'easifit' changeover device.

Keith Herbert



The author of the original article writes:

I haven't been in there properly since it closed to the public ten years ago although I was hired in as 'resident technician' for the filming of *Bronson* starring Tom Hardy. Apart from real people in the first three rows, the remainder was populated by blow-up torsos and heads dressed in dinner jackets and posh frocks! The current proposals have been gleaned from the planning application to Rushcliffe Borough Council and may, I suppose, alter as time goes on. As far as I understand, the theatre, being connected to the main hall (which will be the Headquarters of the Complex) is treated as being in the centre of the high-security zone surrounding the MOD HQ and will not therefore be accessible to the public. As such, they plan to demolish the original foyer, staircases, ladies' and gents' cloakrooms and bar. To be fair, the bar is a later installation constructed as a mezzanine floor above the original two-storey high foyer. Whilst I accept that the building has to be fully accessible for wheelchair users and therefore the staircases present a problem, the demolition seems unnecessary as it is also intended to add two pairs of doors to the existing double doors at the rear of the auditorium for wheelchair use, approached from a passageway off the main hall. By demolishing the front-of-house facilities one wonders whether this a deliberate act to deter future campaigns to keep the theatre open.

As far as the interior of the theatre goes, I gather that it is intended to spend a lot of money on refurbishing the auditorium with new lighting and sound systems. The orchestra pit will be covered over as a rudimentary stage for internal events – lectures etc. There are no proposals to upgrade the stage part and, in fact, I seem to recall that the mission statement specifically states words to the effect that "as a registered

charity, it would be improper to use funds to refurbish the theatre as this would be outside the scope of the charitable aims of the organisation". It is not known whether there will still be access to the Wurlitzer Organ that will be 'buried' under the forestage decking. Sadly, it seems that despite pressure from various interested parties and groups (the company with which I am involved presented over 200 productions in the theatre from 1954 until it closed), it is unlikely that the theatre will ever again be available for public use as it was under the management of the Co-operative Union, who purchased it off the Estate of the late Sir Julien Cahn. On the other hand, the auditorium is to be maintained and modernised and perhaps someday, someone will see sense and authorise the refurbishment of the stage and fly tower so that the theatre can once again be fully used and provide the entertainment for which it was so well designed – and could be a great attraction to the disabled personnel receiving treatment.

Andrew McGowan

CINEMAS IN THE IRISH REPUBLIC



I was interested to read the letters on p30 of the last Bulletin over the confusion between the cinemas in Cahersiveen and Killorglin (Ireland). I hope I can put the matter to rest. Back in August 1971 my late parents, Henry and Doris Wheelan, went on a trip to the Irish Republic and I asked them to photograph any cinemas they came across. By chance, they photographed the two in Cahersiveen and Killorglin. They were taken with a Kodak Instamatic so they are not the best quality. The above is the Kingdom Cinema in Cahersiveen.

Kevin Wheelan

SURCHARGE

Regarding the letter *Premium Pricing* on p30 of the last Bulletin, I can remember a 10p surcharge being applied to all [X]/[18] certificate films at the Odeon Manchester around the late 1970s. Just how widespread this practice was, I don't know. I also remember whilst at the Gaumont Derby the ice creams 'on the tray' being rounded up to a shilling, "to save the sales girls having to carry too much change on the ice cream trays." Nothing changes, does it?

Carl Chesworth

TALKING PICTURES TV

I saw the advert on p6 of the last Bulletin. I spend a lot of my time (too much, probably) watching *Talking Pictures TV*. Some of the films they show haven't stood the test of time but every so often a hidden gem turns up. The 1962 espionage B-picture *The Traitors* is one such gem and for good measure also briefly features the Gaumont (now the Coronet) Notting Hill Gate. One of the traitors has an assignation with his Russian handler in the cinema and there are shots of the exterior, the entrance lobby and box office (Stalls 3/6; Circle 4/-), the staircase, the upper lobby and the circle. According to the poster hanging over the entrance, *Theirs is the Glory* (1946) is being screened, its battle-ridden soundtrack conveniently masking the noise of the gunshot as the said traitor is eliminated whilst seated in the circle.

PS: Really appreciated the front cover of the last Bulletin; memories of being taken by my Dad to the Abbeydale in Sheffield to see *Battle of the River Plate* in the mid-fifties

Terry Hanstock

REGENT LYME REGIS



When the CTA visited this cinema last October, it was closed for front-of-house and other works. These are now finished and I thought you might like to see a picture I took this week. It shows the screen end of the auditorium with the new blue lighting in the scalloped cove, which frames the screen proscenium. During the showing of *Spectre* the audience clapped on three occasions when the new lighting came on before the feature.

Tony Williams

HAUNTED CINEMAS

I am compiling a book about the numerous cases of ghosts or other paranormal events in cinemas. Although I have got over 60 stories already, if any member wishes a cinema to be included, please get in touch. Scotland and Wales are underrepresented, while Kent is well covered because cinema staff have spoken to me! Contact me at 68 Albert Road, Deal, CT14 9RB or [martintapsell@gmx.com]

Martin Tapsell

GLOBE STOCKTON

Ref p34 of the last Bulletin, *Happy Birthday*. My information is that the Globe at Stockton on Tees opened on 16 December 1935, slightly in advance of the date in the Bulletin. At first this was a live theatre, although a projection suite was part of the original design. It was not primarily a cinema until ABC purchased it in April 1937 but the stage was retained – and used – until bingo took over.

Ian Grundy

CHELTENHAM LADIES



The 'silver ladies' from the old Odeon/Gaumont have indeed been reinstated in the new Brewery development but far from happily. They are at the back end, far from any entrance to the new cinema. Having been in an elevated position in the Odeon, they are now at ground level and covered with Perspex, which removes the bas-relief effect. Worst of all there is no caption to inform passers-by of their origins. According to Alan Moore's *The Picture Palaces of Gloucester and Cheltenham* (1989) the reliefs were designed by Newbury A Trent, a cousin of the prolific cinema architect WA Trent.

Tim Sedgwick-Jell [photo]

BRADFORD RESTORATION



Bradford Live has published the plans for the transformation of the gutted Odeon back to the original single auditorium as the large concert venue for the Yorkshire area. [bradford-live.co.uk]. See Newsreel p21.

The exterior with the two corner domes are a much-loved part of the Bradford streetscape. The domes were recently restored to their original appearance after being left to deteriorate when the cinemas and bingo operation closed.

The intention is to restore the auditorium to its original 1930 splendour. Few theatres of this kind remain in their original state. Though much of the plasterwork was lost in the subdivision, there is enough of the original structure to enable full restoration. Even the huge ceiling dome structure survives over the false ceilings that were latterly inserted. There is a lack of large auditoria for large-scale concerts. Piracy has led to the loss of income for performing groups, so live performances are a good way of getting them an income. The New Victoria would have much more atmosphere than the stadia that are often used for these events. The Theatres Trust has advocated full restoration of this theatre, which was threatened with demolition until very recently. Happily, Bradford City Council has now backed the restoration bid.

This building was designed like an American ciné-variety theatre and had a fine Wurlitzer organ; that is still played (now in a new home at the New Victoria Centre Howden-Le-Wear [tinyurl.com/jqmyrly]). Informal discussions have been taking between members of the Cinema Organ Society about the possibility of installing an organ from another theatre in the restored building. The chambers were originally high above the auditorium, which meant that they did not speak to all parts of the auditorium evenly. However, this problem can be solved by mixing the chambers through the auditorium PA. The best results were originally obtained by putting the organ microphone signals through the screen speakers. (The Tower Ballroom Wurlitzer in Blackpool is similarly amplified through speakers either side of the stage). A new position would be required for the organ console lift in the forestage. This has been accomplished in the El Capitan theatre in Los Angeles, which was restored by Disney to its original design with the Wurlitzer organ from the lost San Francisco Fox Theatre replacing the original installation.

Bradford is noted for its 'Big Screen' events. As the original projection rooms have an almost straight throw to the screen, the auditorium would lend itself to showing 70mm films as originally intended, in a theatrical environment. The Projected Picture Trust does have suitable dual gauge 70/35mm projectors that could be installed for non-commercial screenings. For modern concerts there would have to be a big screen with digital projection from the same original box at the back of the mezzanine balcony.

Much money needs to be raised for this project. As there is much concern about a north-south divide between London (which is supposed to be getting another concert hall for Simon Rattle) and the northern cities that do not have the same level of provision. A restored New Victoria would help to redress the balance. Let us hope that they succeed.

John West

LIGHTING THE FESTOONS

I have had a very earnest enquiry from a chap who wants to know "all and everything" about coloured lighting effects on cinema festoon curtains! Please contact [nedwilliams1944@gmail.com] if you can help.

Ned Williams

ERRATA

I made an error last time when I reported on the opening of the Crouch End (London) Picturehouse. I said it had four screens; it does in fact have five. Perhaps you could print a correction?

Jeremy Buck

MORE MUSIC FROM THE CINEMAS

Following on from Carl Chesworth's item on the Pearl and Dean music, I would like to mention other pieces used by ABC and Odeon throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Firstly, the *Showtime* magazine advert shown on the Odeon circuit used a track composed by Les Reed called *Spanish Armada*¹ available on the CD *Cool Dudes*. Staying with Odeon one of the early 60s intermission titles used a piece from the KPM library called *Talking Point*² composed by Ralph Dollimore.

Moving on to the ABC chain who, like Odeon, also used intermission titles. The first, a track titled *Teenage Carnival*³ composed by Keith Mansfield again came from the KPM music library. This piece of music was also used for the popular Southern TV series as the opening theme to *The Freewheelers*. The second intermission title used a piece from the Boosey and Hawkes library titled *Brazil 2000*, composed by Sam Fonteyn; it can be found on a CD *Hotel Easy - Pocos Poolside Pad*. ABC always advertised their magazine *Film Review* every week and one of the early versions from 1962 had a track called *Man on the Move*⁴ composed by Alan Hawkshaw, which also came from KPM. During the 70s ABC would show a lengthy welcome trailer, which would mention theatre hire and other such uses; the background music was a piece called *Score*⁵ composed by Richard Myhill and once again KPM provided this track.

Finally going back to the early 60s some cinemas were in decline and one possibly use was to install Ten Pin Bowling in the stalls area. ABC was widely keen to promote this and released a three-minute trailer appropriately called *Lets Go Bowling* with music composed by John and Joan Shakespeare. Matt Monro was called in to do the vocal and a 45rpm promotion record was issued round the cinema chains. At long last this has finally been issued commercially and can be found in full on the CD *Matt Monro, The Singer's Singer*. I hope this feature has been of interest to all the buffs and I hope to include more of the same in later issues – perhaps members may be able to supply me with similar material.

John R Forster

Editor's Note: John referred to a website that, when I tried it, was reported as 'suspect' by my ISP. To save members any problems, I have found that many of the tracks can be heard on YouTube as follows:

1. www.youtube.com/watch?v=ruIMzpbHntw
2. tinyurl.com/zlhcb7v
3. www.youtube.com/watch?v=60hANMwf49o
4. www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfnxRLxx6a8
5. www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnqhK9ZwY2E

SEEKING HULL CINEMA FOOTAGE

CTA member, Dean Conrad, is seeking archive moving images of extant cinemas in and around Kingston-upon-Hull, East Yorkshire for a *UK City of Culture 2017* project. Current buildings of particular interest are: Tower, Carlton, Mayfair, National, Astoria, Cecil, Plaza (Hessle) and the Playhouse Cinema (Corn Exchange, Beverley). Interior and/or exterior footage is welcome. Moving images with a clear emphasis on the architecture (rather than celebrities at gala performances) is especially sought after. If you can help, please contact Dean via: [dean@tideandco.co.uk].

Dean Conrad

SHIP SHAPE?

There is an interesting film on *Sky Arts* showing the SS France on-board teleciné equipment (about 10 minutes in). It was apparently operated by the ship's radio officers, who received no extra pay for changing 16mm reels every two hours 24/7! They also recorded the BBC news and played in-cabin Muzak from 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm records! Anyone work on a ship or know how the system worked please?

Robert Philpot

Editor's Note: I don't know if it's the same one Robert refers to but at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vGRl3e4azQ] there is a 26-minute advertising film for the SS France; the relevant bit starts 8'15" in.

CINEMA ON TV

Salvage Hunters on Quest (Freeview Ch37) sometimes visits cinemas, theatres and circus buildings. Recently they visited the *Vogue* bingo club in Glasgow (1938 art deco cinema). The programmes are often on twice daily and regularly repeated.

BBC2 is currently showing *Back in Time for the Weekend* on Tuesday evenings. The 1960s programme ended with bingo being played in the Granada Tooting – although it was a cinema throughout the 1960s.

R David Simpson

CINEWORLD

Shares in Cineworld fell 3% to 522p despite the company hitting targets of an 11.6% rise in box office takings in 2015. It said it is on course to meet full year profit targets and will open ten 4DX screens within the next 18 months. Management expects 13 new cinemas to open in 2016, which is below the expectations of 16.

Daily Mail – 13 January; sent in by Keith Bye, Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton

SEASIDE THEATRE REPAIRS

The Hippodrome Brighton, the Marine Theatre Lyme Regis and the Winter Gardens Pavilion Theatre Blackpool are to share a grant of £130,000 towards restoration. The money is part of a government scheme to rejuvenate coastal towns and Cities.

The Stage – 24 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

LONDONERS SPEND £1M A DAY ON CINEMA TICKETS

The Film Distributors' Association found £366.6m worth of tickets were sold in the Capital's 187 cinemas last year – £46m more than in 2014. The West End's 55 venues accounted for £100m of that sum. It means that London generated nearly a third of the £1.24bn UK box-office take in 2015.

Evening Standard – 10 February; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

PINEWOOD FOR SALE

Pinewood Studios could be put up for sale with a price tag of £350m. Shares in the company jumped 18¼% at the news. The studio recently won an eight-year fight to double in size.

Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mirror – 11 January; sent in by Keith Bye, Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton

ODEON FOR SALE

The Odeon and UCI cinema chain, which owns 250 cinemas in seven countries, is being eyed by South Korea's CGV as well as Chinese conglomerate Dalian Wanda and rival firm Vue Entertainment. A price tag of £1bn has been mentioned.

Daily Mail – 13 February; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton

MONSTER BUY-OUT

The Chinese Wanda Group has bought Legendary Entertainment, the Hollywood Studio behind *Godzilla* and *Jurassic World* for £1.7bn. The group is owned by China's richest man, Wang Jintan, who bought a London mansion last December for £80m; he is said to be worth £25bn.

Daily Mirror – 13 January; sent in by Barry Quinton

CINEMECCANICA IN RUSSIA

Cinemeccanica has supplied Barco digital projectors to a new eight-screen multiplex in Saratov. One of the screens has a Dolby Atmos sound system.

DCinema today – 25 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth

THE FORCE AWAKENS

A midnight showing of the new *Star Wars* movie at the ArcLight cinema in Los Angeles descended into uproar as the [digital] projector broke down. The screening stopped, then started again towards the end of the film. Everyone in the theatre went crazy and some fans threw their popcorn at the screen; a video of the furore was posted on Facebook. Moviegoers did get their money back and a voucher for a free movie in the future.

Daily Mail – 19 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth

UK BOX OFFICE

Star Wars has overtaken *Spectre* to be the UK's biggest box office hit of 2015. *The Force Awakens* has made £94.1m since it opened on 17 December, ahead of James Bond's £93.5m. In just over two weeks it became the fourth highest grossing film in British history.

Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph – 4 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton

CINEMA OPERA IS DAMAGING THE REAL THING

Live cinema broadcasts of opera are posing a threat to the art form by draining away local audiences, according to soprano Renée Fleming.

Daily Telegraph – 2 February; sent in by Keith Bye & Carl Chesworth

REALLY USEFUL PURCHASE

Andrew Lloyd Webber's Really Useful Theatres Group is set to purchase the St James Theatre in London's Victoria. It opened in September 2012 and has a 312-seat main auditorium and a 120-seat studio.

The Stage – 17 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

THE HATEFUL EIGHT

Cineworld (together with its subsidiary Picturehouse) and Curzon have not been showing Quentin Tarantino's *The Hateful Eight* after a dispute with the film's distributors. Odeon and Vue have been showing it. Some venues, including the Odeon Leicester Square, have shown 70mm prints. They were delivered as a single reel weighing about 90kg, which took several people to lift it onto the platter. Much like vinyl records, 70mm has its fans who say digital just can't compete.

Daily Telegraph – 7 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth

AE Writes: According to trade sources, this old-fashioned squabble arose because the film's distributor, Entertainment, and the Odeon circuit quite legally negotiated an exclusive West End run at the huge Odeon Leicester Square for *The Hateful Eight* for the first two (or, perhaps, four) weeks, showing on film in 70mm. This was something that director Quentin Tarantino encouraged to preserve its photographic values as it was shot in Ultra Panavision 70, the first use of the process since *Khartoum* in 1966 (Tarantino was behind widespread 70mm presentations in the United States). Picturehouse was not allowed to screen the film concurrently at its West End flagship, Picturehouse Central, on their screen ① (which retains a 35/70mm projector). The other major chains – Vue, Empire, Showcase – all showed the film nationally. Incidentally, the film version was slightly longer than the digital release. From my recollection, overtures on 70mm roadshow films used to play before the curtains opened to display the BBFC certificate but at the Odeon Leicester Square the certificate for *The Hateful Eight* came first and the music played for several minutes over a title reading 'Overture'. Projection was fine and it was nice to support a 70mm screening. I wonder if, in fact, there were any more 70mm first-run showings around the country for the film?

Editor's Note: It's a pity that Pictureville at the NMeM in Bradford is now part of Picturehouse as one of the best venues for 70mm in the country won't be showing it, along with City Screen in York. According to [www.in70mm.com] it has played at the Filmhouse Edinburgh in 70mm.



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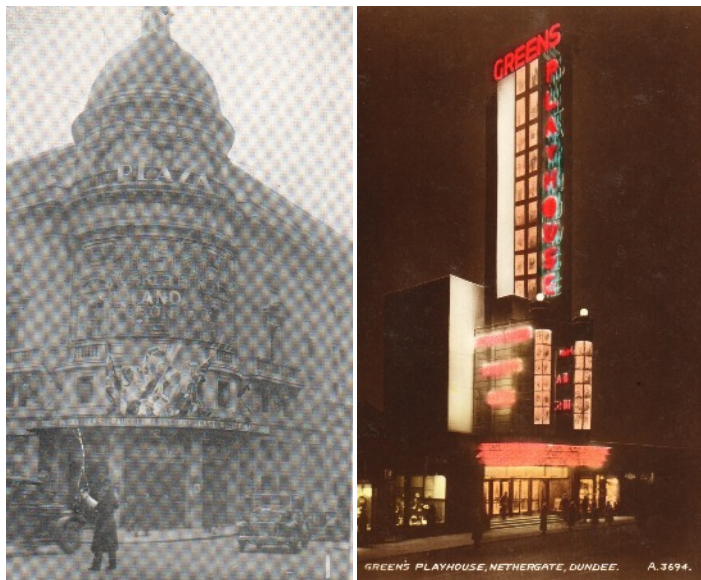
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY



90 Years

Plaza/Apollo 19 Lower Regent Street, London. Opened 1 March 1926. Architect: Frank T Verity. Grade II listed façade. [Above L]

80 Years

Green's Playhouse 106 Nethergate, Dundee. Opened 4 March 1936. Architects: Joseph Emberton & John Fairweather. Category B listed. [Above R]



Odeon/Royal 9 Market Place, Faversham. Opened 9 March 1936. Architect: Andrew Mather. Grade II listed.



Odeon Westborough, Scarborough. Opened 26 March 1936. Architects: Robert Bullivant, J Cecil Clavering & Harry Weedon. Grade II listed.



Odeon/Empire Birmingham Road, Sutton Coldfield. Opened 18 April 1936. Architects: J Cecil Clavering & Harry Weedon. Grade II listed.

50 Years



Curzon 32 Curzon Street, Mayfair, London. Opened 6 April 1966. HG Hammond & Sir John Burnett, Tait & Partners. Grade II listed.

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.

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Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

OBITUARIES

DAVID F WILLIS – 1950-2015



David Willis with organist Ena Baga

David was a member of both the COS and CTA and I think his association with them was very much welded when he got to know Tony Moss. David's huge interest in cinema organs was a dominating feature of his life and began with a chance purchase of a record in WH Smith in 1969 costing 12s/11d. He thought he was buying a recording of an orchestra playing TV and radio themes but it turned out to be a Compton cinema organ. He was instantly hooked and started to listen to the radio programme *The Organist Entertains*.

In 1972 he heard Louis Gerard play the Compton-Noterman organ at the Dreamland Cinema. With his fiancée Jacqueline, they sat in the front row of the circle and he described the moment as "just magic". From then on, David was privileged to meet many of the organists from the golden age of cinema organ performance and not least was the famous Ena Baga, who became a friend whom he frequently visited. When Ena died in 2006 (aged 98), each year on the anniversary of her death he visited her grave to place flowers there.

My first memory of David was when I went to visit him about twenty years ago to ask him about cinema buildings of the Thanet area, in preparation for a CTA visit that was being planned. He was meticulous with the information that he provided and I particularly recall a mannequin dressed as an usherette placed just inside his front door to welcome visitors. We remained good friends for the rest of his life.

David had moved around frequently however in his later life he settled down to live in Cliftonville, Kent. He endured a long and brave battle with liver cancer and with the support of friends he was able to survive many more months than the doctors had predicted. David married Jacqueline in 1973 and they had three sons. However, they later divorced but their contact continued.

David was born in Beckenham Kent on 23 January 1950 and died on 31 December 2015, aged 65. His funeral was held in Margate Cemetery and, during the humanist service, the congregation listened to a favourite recording that he had chosen of Robert Wolfe playing the Wurlitzer of the Thursford Collection.

David will be missed by his family and his large circle of friends.

Richard Norman

JOHN BENZING – 1941-2016



John had a passion for the building trade from the word go, so was fortunate to be educated at a local trades school in Ruislip, where he lived all his life. He then moved on to Willesden Technical College where he achieved a Higher National Diploma in building. Then it was into the world of work, firstly with a large national contractor based in the centre of London and later with a local medium-sized building firm. All the while he had a passion for cinema and theatre buildings and he was fortunate in the early eighties to come across the CTA and joined immediately.

One of his early CTA contacts was the late Bill Wren, then the membership secretary and a relationship blossomed, which was to endure until the unfortunate passing of Bill on 5 May 1998. In the mid-eighties Bill encouraged John to take on the rôle of Visits Secretary, a rôle he threw himself into with great enthusiasm until health issues forced him to stand down in the mid-nineties. His goal was always to arrange a visits 'spectacular' over the long Easter break and, during his time at the helm and in conjunction with other local members, many well-attended trips were made that covered the length and breadth of the country, from Aberdeen in the north to Plymouth in the south west. He remained a lay member to the very end and often commented that thanks to the CTA he had travelled to distant lands that normally would have been way beyond his horizons – the USA, Australia, Russia and most of the European capitals.

John, as a humanist, had little time for organised religion but he got on well with the Zoroastrians, who saved his favourite cinema, the Grosvenor, Rayners Lane. He made many close friends within the CTA during his years of membership and, with his passing, he will be missed by all.

Martin Tapsell



John (bottom right) with other CTA members at Santa's Grotto – Christmas 2010

NECROLOGY



Frank Finlay CBE (89)
*Casanova &
The Three Musketeers*



Conrad Philips (90)
*William Tell
(1950s TV)*



Alan Rickman (69)
*Die Hard &
Harry Potter*

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the CTA is sent to the following new members: Andrew Byers, Carina Volkes, Joan Street, Chris Street (Associate member), John Hobson, Timothy Leman, David Daniells, John Williams, Peter King, Charles Clarke (from Associate to Full Membership) and Philip Knatchbull.

DONATIONS

Our grateful appreciation and thanks are due to these members who generously added a donation to their subscription when renewing: DA Abbott, SD Allanson, E Anderson, DM Armstrong, K Bailey, KJ Barnes, DA Bennett, PJ Bennett, W Burns, B Campbell, GH Catterick, SA Christie, DA Cox, R Deahl, MM Dupré, VA Edwards, KJ Finch, M Ford, RA Franklin, GW Gill, G Greaves, RC Gurd, W Hallowell, GF High, GA Jenkins, CM Jennings, RO Jones, AP Jowett, AS King, RS Laugharne, MD Lightfoot, AC Llewellyn, R Marks, DJ McIntyre, JJ McWilliams, RN Mowe, MA Ostler, TA O'Sullivan, G Painter, T Pate, N Pemberton, JE Pilblad, DJ Reeves, PD Regan, HR Rowley, D Schofield, HA Scott, TR Sedgwick-Jell, CB Simmonds, C Snowden, BJ Steer, P Tipping, EM Trott, CW Turner, SR Warne, K Wenz, AA Wilks and JW Williams.

IN MEMORIAM

Sadly we learned of the death on 28 January of Roy Smith of Tilehurst, Reading, at the age of 85. He joined the CTA in 2000. He was formerly Chief Projectionist at the Odeon and Pavilion Cinemas in Reading and he had also worked at Pinewood Studios. John A Benzing of Ruilip passed away on 18 February, aged 75. A member of long-standing, he joined the CTA in 1984. To his great regret, ill health led to him resigning his membership last October. A full obituary appears opposite.

Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary

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.

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London's West End Cinemas

by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.

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Published in collaboration with English Heritage.

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HARBOUR OF MISSING MEN

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CONTINUOUS DAILY **ABC** CONTINUOUS DAILY
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I found something rather nice in a Paignton antique shop. It measures 20" x 12½" – quite a large Box Office Card. These would have been distributed weekly to some local shops and businesses for public display, usually in return for a pass card offering two free tickets a week. *Father of the Bride* was released in 1950 and underneath the label "retained for further week" it says "Sunday December 3rd for 7 Days". I have not seen the ABC slogan "First and Foremost" before.

Sent in by Richard Jones

Top left sent in by David A Ellis; top right [1973] sent in by Bob Paddock. Bottom right from *Picturegoer* magazine 27 December 1958; I'm sorry I forgot to record who sent this [and many similar ones].

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