



CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

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

# BULLETIN

Vol 50 No 5

September / October 2016



The auditorium and proscenium of the Forum Bath, visited by the CTA in August



The new Everyman five-screen cinema in Harrogate (North Yorks) due to open on 9 September



## FROM YOUR EDITOR

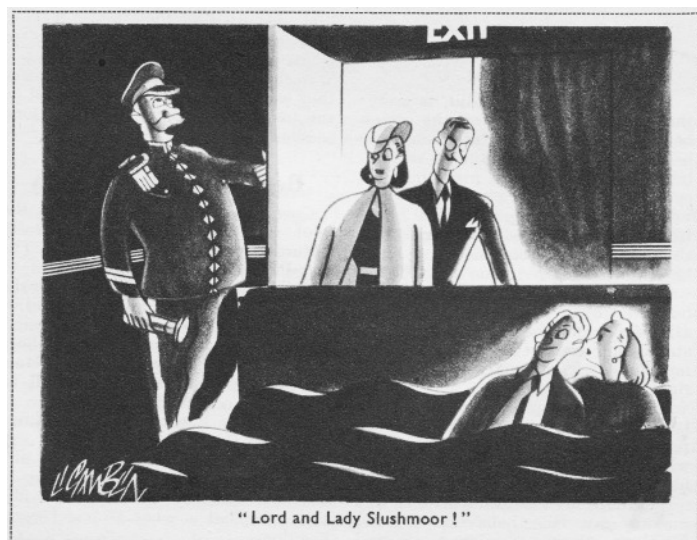
I was surprised nobody contacted me about the Roman Cinema item on p25 of the last Bulletin. Did you notice the date of the original article – 1 April? This is one of the better April Fools I have come across, although not quite as good as the Spaghetti Harvest.

Despite this edition being bigger than the last, I still have some items held over; notably a couple of submissions about New Zealand cinemas, an article from Gavin McGrath about new uses for old cinemas and some more 'wanderings' from our friend Hugh Sykes. I should be able to get these in the next edition. There are more events and casework than usual in this issue. In the next edition there should be only one visit report so I should have plenty of space. If this means I exhaust my stockpile, I'm sure you will come to the rescue. I still have many holiday snaps you sent in yet to use.

My sister gave me a 'selfie stick' for Christmas. Not wanting to take photos of myself, I have found a new use for it. If you put the camera on a time delay (or have a remote control) you can use it to raise the camera over hoardings and see what's going on behind them. I photographed the shored-up façade of the Forum/Empire in Ealing and the demolition of the Hoxton Cinema in Pitfield Street. Next time I see a hoardings around a cinema, I know what to do.

*Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor*

## CARTOON CORNER



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

A MUST for your collection

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by Richard Gray

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

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Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer

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**THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER**

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(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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## VISITS AND EVENTS

### An Invitation from Her Majesty's

Wednesday 19 October at 11:30am



A mid-week visit to Her Majesty's Theatre Haymarket, London. This comprehensive tour of the historic venue in London's Theatreland will be led by Mark Fox, the Advertising Manager for the Really Useful Theatres Group and Chairman of the Frank Matcham Society. The current theatre of 1897 was designed by the famous architect CJ Phipps, who also designed many other venues including the Lyric, Prince of Wales and Vaudeville theatres. The site has a theatrical history dating back to Vanbrugh's Queen's Theatre of 1705. The tour will last about two hours and involves quite a strenuous walk around the theatre, including climbing many stairs.

*Photo above courtesy Tony Webster, Creative Commons Licence.*

### Monday Morning at the London Palladium

Monday 7 November at 11:30am



Due to the popularity of this visit earlier this year, we have been able to arrange a repeat visit to the legendary London Palladium. Built for Walter Gibbons, it was designed by renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham as a palatial variety theatre seating 2,298, in a style described as 'French Rococo'. The Palladium opened on 26 December 1910 with a variety programme, which included music hall star Nellie Wallace.

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.

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

## CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

### Grade II\* Listed



Objections by the CTA to the installation of the proposed 'pods' in the circle of the ex-Odeon [now Everyman, pictured above in March 2016] in Muswell Hill have been augmented by complementary opposition from The Twentieth Century Society and Save Britain's Heritage (SAVE). Meanwhile Historic England has devolved determination of the listed building consent application to the local Council. {13783}

Architect Sean Soanes of Ipswich has been appointed to oversee the intended refurbishment of the Electric Palace in Harwich. The Association has proffered advice on design of new seating. See p18 Bulletin 50/3. {2597}

Architects, project manager and heritage consultant have now been appointed by Antic Limited to further its plans for adaptation of the Granada/EMD at Walthamstow. {9397}

### Grade II Listed



It is gratifying to report that the Dudley Hill Picture House in Bradford [pictured above in August 2005] was recently listed. {36724}

No objection was raised to an application for a creditable scheme of replacement fenestration at the Curzon in Clevedon.

### Unlisted

In the hiatus between the Court of Appeal's rejection of SAVE's application to retain the fine façade of the Futurist in Liverpool and the organisation's preparation of an application to the Supreme Court, the local Council took advantage of its opportunity and demolished the building. Whilst within the letter of the law, this unseemly display of cultural vandalism is reminiscent of the employment of the 'Midnight Demolition Company', oft in the past utilised by unscrupulous owners to prevent imminent listing of a property.

**More Casework in the full Bulletin**



# 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.

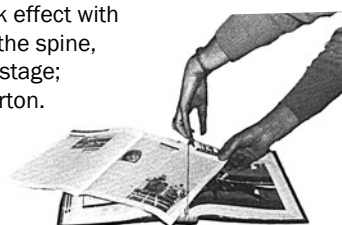
### PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

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; <b>Atherley</b> Southampton; Hippodrome, Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; ABC in NW London.
No 17	£3.00	<b>Special Issue</b> 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; <b>Ideal</b> Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; Granada Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; <b>Albert Hall</b> Sheffield; <b>Regal</b> 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; <b>Carlton</b> Swansea; Committee's Choice.
No 26	£4.50	<b>Paramount</b> Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; <b>Electric</b> 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; <b>Apollo</b> Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: <b>Essoldo</b> – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the <b>Essoldo</b> 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	<b>Beaufort</b> Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophane lighting; Imitations of <b>Odeon</b> ; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; The <b>Clifton</b> Circuit; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the <b>Electric Palace</b> Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; <b>Palace</b> Conwy; <b>Carlton</b> Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two <b>Regals</b> ; <b>Odeon</b> North Finchley; <b>Majestic</b> Oxford; Films at the <b>Royal Albert Hall</b> .
No 40	£6.00	<b>Tolmer</b> 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.

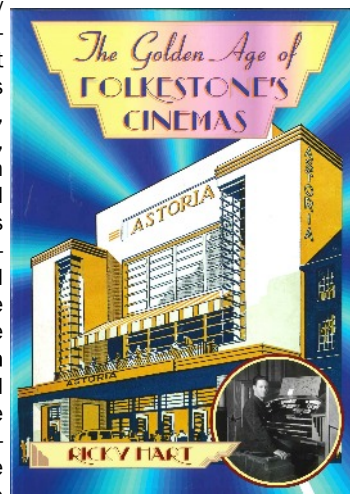


## New Publication

### The Golden Age of Folkestone's Cinemas

by Ricky Hart – A4 softback, 82 pages, fully illustrated in black and white and colour. Special price to CTA members: £12.50 plus postage (normal RRP £14.95)

This attractive book was written by Ricky Hart – known to cinema organ enthusiasts as "The Standaard Man" – because in his house was installed the organ of that make, originally in the Savoy Cinema, Folkestone. After his death in 2009, his son Brian has completed the work and added the captions to the many interesting photographs. The stories of the principal cinemas in the town: the Electric/Savoy, the Central, the Playhouse and the Astoria/Odeon are recalled in some detail and there is a chapter describing the Pleasure Gardens Theatre too. Another chapter relates how the Standaard was rescued from the Savoy and what happened to Folkestone's other organs. A well-presented book with some rarely-seen photographs.



## Still Available (reviewed in previous issues)

**From Celluloid to Cereal – Cinemas That Became Supermarkets** by Gavin McGrath, 28 pages, A4 paperback, £4.00 plus postage.

**From Pictures to Pints – Cinemas That Became Pubs** by Gavin McGrath, 30 pages, last few copies – £4.00 plus postage.

**The Cinemas of RA Thomas** by Mick Collins, 346 pages, large paperback, £24.95 plus postage.

## Second Hand Copies available

### ABC and GAUMONT circuit histories

We have available some good second-hand copies of the very rare book *ABC: The First Name in Entertainment* by Allen Eyles, published by the CTA in 1993. Price £30.00 plus £3.00 postage.

Also a couple of second-hand copies of *Gaumont British Cinemas* also by Allen, published in 1996. Price £20.00 plus £3.00 postage.

Please send cheque/PO/credit card details to the usual address. If there are more orders received than copies available, a draw will be held.

## 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.

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## 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.



# A DAY IN BATH

A report of the CTA visit on 8 August 2016

by B Nash

Every once in a while it seems that a visit was just meant to be. According to Mike Wood, the organiser of this CTA walking tour, it was local resident Rupert Rhymes (until recently Chairman of the acclaimed Frank Matcham Society) who handed him a list of venues and some of the contacts, following a private visit to the Forum. Little did Mike know but during the gestation period, four of them would move on and one would pass away before he could get the contacts aligned and the doors opened.

The one constant during the run-up to our arrival in Bath, was the friendliness of the people of the City and our eventual hosts. For a town that is teaming with tourists, the locals remain cheerful. It had been about twenty years since the last CTA visit to Bath, so perhaps it was this, the relative ease of access from other parts of the country, the prospect of an easy summer's day stroll through a world heritage site, or could it have just been the mix of venues, that drew such a large group?

Since that last visit, there have been two losses, two restoration and repurposing, a rebuild within an existing structure and a new build, plus most people's favourite, the Little (WA Williams 1935 Grade II) still in business as a cinema and currently operated by Picturehouse.



The exterior and screen ① at the Little

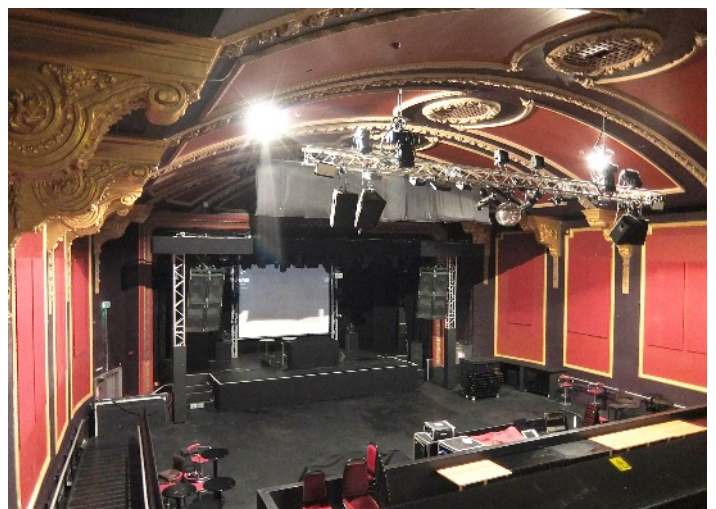
Our group numbering almost fifty set off only a few minutes late due to a delayed arrival of the train from London, pausing at the Old Theatre Royal (1750 Hippisley/Palmer Grade II) for a view of the little-changed exterior, the interior having been completely reconstructed for a Masonic Lodge. Then, passing the Abbey and Roman Baths/Pump Room, we arrived at the Little for our first visit. Ollie, the duty manager, was waiting for us and we went straight to the main screen in the original auditorium. Built for theatre by Consuelo de Reyes and Peter King (and still owned by the family) but with the possibility of showing film from the start, this makes a very comfortable place for 171 people in stalls and on sofa seating in the Royal balcony to see a film; now on digital but with the film projector and tower still in situ. Screen ② seats 70 and has its own bar and lounge. Ollie was a great host, telling us its story, showing us the working areas and answering our questions; we could have stayed all day.

Bath lost the venerable Southgate Odeon/Regal/Picturedrome, which fell to a large redevelopment for retail. Its eight-screen replacement Odeon (Aaron Evans 2004) opened within the Kingsmead complex and it is probably the only multiplex new build within a world heritage site. They had all screens working due to the school holidays but duty manager Clayton took a few minutes out of his busy schedule to tell us about it since its opening on his first day working there. We might sometimes be a bit unimpressed by Odeon's design portfolio but I've always had a very good welcome from its staff.



The exterior + and foyer of the Kingsmead Odeon

A couple of minutes later we were outside the Komedia / ABC Beau Nash to be greeted by Erica, who is Komedia's marketing manager. This is now a branch of the Brighton comedy club, which took possession following a three year hiatus and some campaigning after closure in 2005 when the Kingsmead Odeon opened. It now has a flat floor and café/bar in the Foyer/Stalls with the Balcony remaining seated. For a short time, the Komedia ran film occasionally but this has now ceased and the roller screen and temporary box (the original now being used for storage) are to be de-rigged. Erica took us everywhere and told us that the venue was enjoying continued success on comedy and music events.



The interior of the Komedia

Read the rest of this report  
in the full Bulletin



# PYRAMID/ODEON/TATTON CINEMA, SALE

By Charles Morris



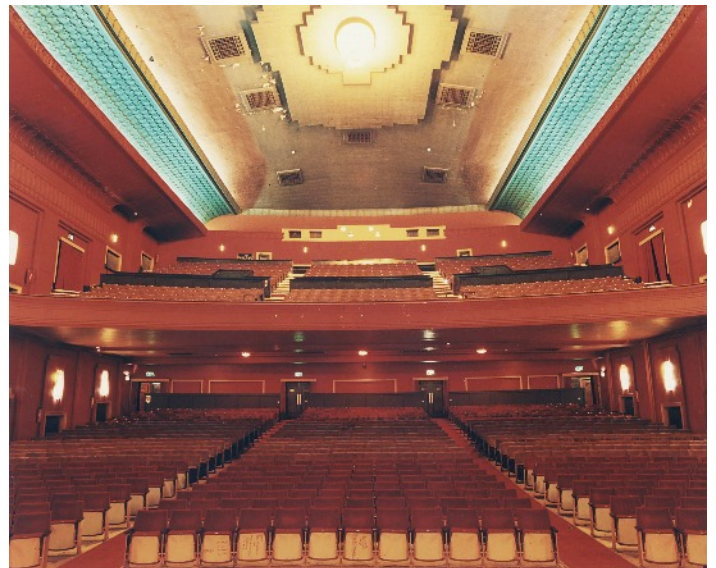
Richard Hagon's description [p11 last Bulletin] of the precarious route to the projection box presumably refers to its access from the stage. There was a perfectly conventional access from the rear stalls via a concrete staircase, into which was an additional entry from the circle.

I had the privilege to be a part-time operator up till the cinema's closure in December 1984. In fact I still have a key to the projection box! Sadly I was not there for the very last show as the company had persuaded me to relieve at their Savoy Heaton Moor on that night and I took the view that it was more positive to be working at a cinema that was staying open than to mourn the passing of the Pyramid/Tatton.



I had a joyous three months working in an unspoilt 1930s super, my only such experience. The staff were a cut above those with whom I had most recently been acquainted at the Classic Blackburn and the cinema was operated most professionally under the Tatton banner. The projection room had the full Odeon GK21 set-up, replete with the 'elephant's foot' bases and square-ish spool boxes, though with President arclamps rather than the original Lightmasters. Operating single-handedly was a challenge, partly due to the lighting controls being on the back wall, whereby one couldn't properly see the effect one was creating with the various colours for the proscenium side grilles and ceiling coves. Curiously, although there were three sets of footlights, it was only possible to use one at a time as they were controlled by a single dimmer and a rotary switch to select the colour required. There was a fully equipped stage and the main curtain just rose straight up into the fly-tower.

There was a vast foyer, above which had been a café, then a Victor Sylvester Ball-room and finally regional offices for Odeon Cinemas, though vacant by the time I was there. I



had an interesting time combing through the rubbish looking for memorabilia.

Unfortunately closure was inevitable. It was the darkest year of British cinema exhibition and this near 2,000-seat cinema was attracting typically 50 patrons a night at that time – during the week at any rate. The final show, on Saturday 1 December 1984, was *The Woman In Red* starring Gene Wilder. In fact I made a mad dash from Heaton Moor to be there at the very end but the

show had finished and I arrived just as the staff were departing.

Many years ago I corresponded with one of the Pyramid's first projectionists. An extract from one of his letters reads:

"I was there just before it opened, there being a delay because the powers that be refused to grant a licence until public support made them change their mind. When I visited the cinema during construction, the projection room was a very long one but before completion the walls to the spotlight rooms were added, thus altering the size drastically [it still remained very spacious – author]. It had of course a full orchestra and organ on opening, a large café and a troupe of dancing girls, who were part of the ciné-variety provided nightly. The girls later on were dispensed with; then, I believe, the acts, then orchestra and of course the organ were later disbanded. Originally we had Simplex Standard rear-shutter projectors, Peerless rotating-positive arc-lamps supplied by two Peebles rectifiers in an adjacent room, Westrex [Western Electric] sound but strangely enough no non-sync unit, the proprietor at that time (John Buckley) assumed the orchestra/organ would provide any incidental music required. All stage lighting whilst I was there was controlled from a stage dimmer board as were all the tabs and of course main curtains."

John Buckley relinquished control of the Pyramid very soon after its opening. A year later it was apparently run by Union Cinemas, then from 1936 it was being operated by Anglo-Scottish Theatres Ltd, who also ran the Apollo Ardwick for a while. The Tatton Group, which acquired the Pyramid/Odeon in 1981, gained its name from the Tatton cinema in Gatley, which was one of four cinemas in Greater Manchester operated by Jack Edge. The others were the Davenport Stockport, the Mayfair Whitefield and the Savoy Heaton Moor. They were all acquired by Apollo Leisure when Mr Edge died. Ironically the Savoy, which was probably the least successful of the group, is the only one to survive.

John Buckley went on to create a circuit of cinemas in the Manchester area, whose remnants were eventually taken over by the Star circuit.

*Interior photos by Mike Phillips, exterior by the author*



# REJUVENATING SPA BREATHES NEW LIFE INTO CINEMA

by Mike Whitcombe

The words 'cosy' and 'multiplex' are rarely used in the same sentence. Multiplexes, after all, are efficiently designed, purpose-built venues, slick with modernism and state of the art technology that the latest savvy generation feel perfectly at home within. In contrast, traditional High Street cinemas, despite digital upgrades and additional auditoria, always seem to possess a cosy charm that, while accentuating the cinema-going experience, fails to emulate the hip, urbanised, instant gratification that 'plexes so effortlessly offer.



An exception to this generalisation is the Vue six-screen multiplex in Royal Leamington Spa. Although possessing all the trimmings of a multiplex – plush seats, good sound and picture quality, highly over-priced refreshments – it also combines an intimate charm that embraces you as soon as you enter the low-ceilinged entrance foyer. This fact, however, should not come as a surprise. For the site originally opened as a single-screen cinema eighty years ago and, despite the drastic changes it has undergone since, continues to give the impression, particularly from the outside, of being a 'real' movie theatre and not an out-of-town retail park cinema that could easily double as a large warehouse facility.

The history of this Warwickshire site is fascinating. It opened originally on Monday 14 September 1931, as the **Regal**. The opening film was the British International Pictures production of *The Middle Watch*, a nautical comedy starring Owen Nares, Jacqueline Logan and Dodo Watts, which Halliwell describes as "naval froth in primitive talkie form; absurdly long but popular."

Built by the Bath Cinema Company and designed by Horace G Bradley of Birmingham, the external look of the building was very much art deco in style. This was in contrast with the then equally fashionable Oriental style of the interior that climaxed in Oriental dragons backlit on coloured glass either side of a 45 foot wide proscenium. The auditorium had a capacity of 1,338 and was constructed on a stadium plan with a raised stepped section at the rear rather than an overhanging balcony. For pre-film entertainment a Barbieri 3 Manual / 6 Rank organ was installed. It was opened by Frederick Jukes and it's believed to be the only British cinema installation of this Italian-made instrument. It was removed in 1955 when CinemaScope was installed.

In November 1936 the **Regal** was taken over by Stratford Picture House Co Ltd, part of the Clifton Cinema Chain, run by Sir Sidney Clift. By the 1960s the **Regal** was the head office of Theatre Administration, which ran and managed the Clifton-owned cinemas in Warwick, Leamington, Evesham and Stratford on Avon. (Clifton Cinemas and Associated Companies provided management for the rest of the Clifton circuit). Twenty years later the **Regal** was the last remaining Clifton-owned cinema run by Theatre Administration.

In 1969 the cinema was temporarily closed for the installation of 70mm. This resulted in huge changes inside and out. Internally, the auditorium capacity was reduced to 904 seats and divided into two sections, with smoking in the middle and non-smoking on the outside. Externally the main entrance in Dormer Place and the rear stalls entrance in Portland Place were both bricked up and a new entrance was created on the corner of Augusta Place. An office building was also constructed on part of the car park. The gala reopening was on Monday 28 December 1969, with a 70mm showing of *Oliver!*. Twelve local mayors and the Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire watched from the newly refurbished auditorium.

The metamorphosis of the **Regal** from a single-screen picture palace to a six-screen 'plex began in January 1993 when Apollo purchased the building. Apollo eventually submitted plans for a new screen in the 1969-built office space. This was approved and screen ② was opened on 19 April 1996, with 144 seats. Later that year the original auditorium was tripled. Two screens were converted from the sides of the raised rear stepped area with another auditorium opening in the former front stalls. All three screens were served by the original projection box.



A mosaic in the floor of the foyer of the **Regal**, now sadly hidden

A couple of unforeseen disasters now struck the former **Regal**. The first came in Easter 1998 when terrible storms ravaged the area, leaving a great deal of Leamington flooded. Speaking in an article printed in the *Leamington Courier* in 2004, manager Gary Stevens recalled those floods. "When I arrived the damage was all behind closed doors and everywhere was still – when I opened doors there was a sea of brown muddy water that covered all the chairs. When the waters went down it smelt like the sea and we found a fish and two duck eggs." Remarkably, the cinema was open just six weeks later. Ironically, at the time of the flood, the cinema was showing *Titanic*!

Two years later a far more serious incident occurred when fire ravaged the interior of the building. Fortunately, nobody was injured and the cinema was evacuated in ninety seconds. £500,000 worth of damage was caused and, at its peak, the fire brigade reported that temperatures in the corridors reached a thousand degrees Fahrenheit. This time the cinema was closed for three months while an extensive refit was carried out.

Like most cinemas built during the golden age of Hollywood, a ghost haunts this palace of dreams. According to Margaret Rushton of the Leamington History Group, the spectre is a lady believed to be Edith Devis. She was the widow of a wealthy local man who sponsored many interwar charitable endeavours. It's alleged that Mrs Devis helped fund the building of the **Regal**, although this was never publicly acknowledged and that after being killed in a car crash her spirit began roaming the cinema.

Vue took over the site in 2014 and the current six screens have a total capacity of 898. Screen ① with 286 seats, is the largest while the smallest is screen ④ with 96 seats. Located a block away from the attractive white faced Regency architecture of Leamington's main shopping street called The Parade and a short stroll from the famous Royal Pump Rooms and the beautiful Jephson Gardens, this Vue cinema plays an important rôle in the centre of town – as any good cinema always should.

Cinema purists would argue with some justification that the former **Regal** is not a multiplex in the true sense of the word. But the site is marketed as a 'plex and the quality of comfort, from the rest rooms to the auditorium seating, certainly exceeds some purpose-built multiplexes. The fact that after eighty years the former **Regal** is still entertaining the residents of Leamington despite flood, fire, a world war and box office slumps is a happy ending that even the biggest summer blockbuster would struggle to emulate.





# NEWSREEL

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

## ABERDEEN

An 850-seat cinema (number of screens not specified) has been proposed as part of a development on the northern outskirts of the City. The MOD, which owns nearby Blackdog Rifle Range, has objected to the scheme, saying they would be "noisy neighbours".

*Press & Journal (Aberdeen) – 7, 16 July*



The Forum nightclub that occupies the former Picturedrome / Cinema House is to close at the end of September. The building was originally a Union Hall, built in 1897. It became a full-time cinema in 1910 and films ceased in January 1971. It is listed category B. {23175}

*Evening Express (Aberdeen) – 9 August; photo taken September 2008*

## ALTON (Hants)



The Palace Cinema has had the rear of the auditorium demolished to make way for flats. The cinema is still open with screen ① in the balcony area and screen ② in the rear stalls. The auditorium was demolished from the front of the balcony edge back. The cinema first opened in December 1912 as the Alton Picture Theatre with 440 seats. It closed for modernisation in February 1937 and reopened as the Palace Cinema in June 1937. A new balcony had been introduced and seating was now 620. The opening film was *Poor Little Rich Girl* Starring Shirley Temple. The cinema was modernised again in 1969 and reopened as The New Palace but the "New" was soon dropped. In 1988 new owner Raj Jeyasingham took over and altered the Palace into cinema and bingo by extending the balcony forward, with the balcony becoming a single-screen cinema and the stalls a bingo operation. Bingo ceased in the late 90s and a second screen was added in the rear of the stalls area in 2001. The CTA visited in June 2015 – see p7 Bulletin 49/5. {24101}

*Sent in by Peter Lea [photo]*

## ASHFORD (Kent)

Plans have been submitted to expand the existing twelve-screen Cineworld at Eureka Leisure Park by three screens, including an IMAX screen. Meanwhile, it has been revealed that the six-screen cinema to be built at Elwick Place in the town centre will be operated by Picturehouse.

*Kentish Express – 30 June, 7 July; Ashford Herald – 7 July*

## BANBRIDGE (Co Down, Northern Ireland)

Some five months after the independent Iveagh Studios was acquired by IMC, rival circuit Omniplex opened an eight-screen multiplex at The Outlet Retail Village on 17 June. It boasts Northern Ireland's first MAXX screen with dual Sony 4k projection and Dolby Atmos sound.

*News Letter (Northern Ireland) – 18 July; sent in by David Simpson*

## BANGOR (Gwynedd)

The new £49m Pontio Centre will open on 31 October, a year later than envisaged. The centre's 200-seat cinema will open on 19 November. {52011}

*Daily Post (Wales) – 15 September*

## BARLESTONE (Leics)



The Cosy has recently been demolished. The cinema stood on Barton Road and was constructed by a local builder on behalf of Mr Thomas Chesterton in the late 1920s. Built on simple lines it had an arched proscenium with a width of 47 feet+ with plain decoration. The stage had a depth of 10 feet with one dressing room. The auditorium had wooden bench seating to the front and traditional-style cinema seating to rear, which also incorporated a number of double seats for courting couples. The entrance was to the side of the building with a small paybox on the right as you entered and beyond were double doors leading into the auditorium. In the early years before the advent of sound on film, the Cosy played silent films on Tuesdays Fridays and Saturdays, with piano accompaniment from Nell Lovell; her husband Bill also worked at the cinema and managed the pay box.

Thomas Chesterton had also operated a small cinema in the neighbouring village of Newbold Verdon. Thomas passed away in the early 1950s and the business was taken over by his son Maurice. He continued to operate the cinema for a number of years but eventually sold it to a Mr George Weston. Mr Weston ran the cinema very well but changed the opening hours to Thursdays and Saturdays only as business had been affected by the advent of television and the introduction of new film formats such as CinemaScope. And so in 1960 the Cosy closed its doors for the last time to cinema; the seating and equipment were removed and the building altered into a village hall, operated by the local Parish Council. This survived until July 2016 when the Parish Council decided that the building was no longer viable and subsequently sold it for demolition to make way for two new houses.

*Sent in by Peter Lea; photo taken April 2007*

**Editor's Note:** ‡ 47ft seems much too big for a building of this size.

## BASILDON (Essex)

In 2014 the Council put plans for a cinema in East Square on hold after the Eastgate Shopping Centre announced rival plans for a cinema as part of its revamp. However the latter scheme has been unable to find an operator so the Council is reviving their plans. A spokesman said they would be presenting their latest proposals to cinema companies in the hope of gaining their interest again. The town already has an eighteen-screen multiplex at Festival Leisure Park.

*Basildon Echo – 25 July; Basildon Recorder – 5 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth*



### BIRKENHEAD (Wirral)

Permission is being sought to demolish the former Savoy and build apartments. It opened in October 1938 with 2,100 seats in stalls and circle. It was renamed ABC in the 1960s and closed in March 1982. It was last used for snooker. See p14 Bulletin 50/3. {32707}

[Wirral Globe](#) – 13 August; sent in by Philip Mayer

### BIRMINGHAM (Great Barr)

The former Clifton reopened in June as a restaurant and banqueting hall called *Bad Shah Palace*. The art deco building opened in February 1938 and films ceased in November 1979. It was converted into a bingo club, which closed in June 2008. It became a Chinese restaurant, which had closed by 2011. In January 2012 an arson attack caused serious damage to the building. It is listed grade II. Pictures and details of the former Clifton are on the front cover and in *Clifton Circuit History* inside *Picture House* No36 [2011], where it is called Clifton Perry Barr rather than Great Barr

[Express & Star](#) – 28 July; photo taken June 2008

### BLACKPOOL (Lancs)



Finishing touches were being made to the Regent in preparation for its reopening, which was due to be on 29 July. The film chosen for the occasion will probably be Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction*, following a poll of locals. The grade II listed building has been restored as an emporium on the ground floor with the cinema above. A BBC Lancashire interview with the operator is on their Facebook page at [tinyurl.com/zlhyd58]. The CTA visited the Regent in July 2014, when the owner discussed his plans to return films to the building. {6549}

[Blackpool Gazette](#) – 13 July; video link sent in by Billy Speight; photo taken June 2009

### BLAENAU FFESTINIOG (Gwynedd)

A new 48-seat cinema opened on 23 July in the former Police Station with the film *BFG*. The cinema is on the ground floor, leaving the first floor free for other events and functions. Funding came from a Capital Lottery Grant and the Magnox Socio Economic Scheme. The last cinema in the town, the Forum, closed in the 1970s and is now a supermarket. [www.cellb.org]

[North Wales Weekly News](#) – 29 June

### BLAENAVON (Torefan)

A 70-seat digital cinema opened in the Workmen's Hall on 22 July. The cinema had closed in October 2013 when 35mm film became unavailable. The hall is thought to have a large (c900-seat) auditorium on the first floor, which was used as a cinema in the 1940s and 50s – does anyone have more information?

[South Wales Argus](#) – 15 July

### BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)

Minor changes to the access for a planned fourth screen at the Picturedrome have been backed by planning officers. The alterations will improve the means of getting in and out of the yet-to-be-built 114-seat auditorium. They were put forward by Bognor Regis Town Council, which owns the Grade II listed building and approved by Arun District Council officials. The town Council's £850,000 plans for the extra screen were approved by Arun last year. The new screen will be located in the cinema car park behind the current building.

[Bognor Regis Post](#) – 12 August; sent in by Mike Whitcombe

### BOURNEMOUTH

The new name for the West Central development has been announced – BH2. It is due to open early next year and will include a ten-screen 2,000-seat Odeon.

[Daily Echo \(Bournemouth\)](#) – 23 June

### BRADFORD (West Yorks)

Construction has begun on a six-screen 700-seat Light cinema in The Broadway shopping centre. No opening date has been given.

[Telegraph & Argus \(Bradford\)](#) – 9 August

### BRIDGEWATER (Somerset)



The Scott Cinema celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on 13 July. The building opened as the 1,525-seat Odeon in 1936 with Douglas Fairbanks Jr in *The Amateur Gentleman*. It was sold to Classic in 1967; they subdivided it into bingo in the front stalls and two 250-seat cinemas in the raised balcony area. Today the cinemas are operated by Scott Cinemas; Mecca bingo continues in the former stalls. {16641}

[Bridgewater Mercury](#) – 5 July; photo taken February 2006

### CANTERBURY (Kent)

A public exhibition has been held of revised plans for the Kingsmead development. They include an eight-screen cinema; no operator has been named.

[Canterbury Times](#) – 13 July; [Kentish Gazette](#) – 14 July

### CHELMSFORD (Essex)

Everyman will operate the five-screen cinema to open as part of the £120 million John Lewis shopping complex in Bond Street later this year – not Cineworld as previously thought.

[East Anglian Daily Times](#) – 15 July

### CHESTER

An operator has been selected to manage the six-screen cinema that will be above the new market hall in the Northgate development; their identity remains unknown.

[Chester Chronicle](#) – 28 July

### CHRISTCHURCH (Hants)

For almost two years enthusiasts at the Regent have been assembling a small cinema museum. Since the projection box now only has to house a digital projector, it has left space for a Kalee 11, a Simplex E7 and various other items from the film era. They are having an open day on Saturday 8 October and will demonstrate 35mm film. Tickets are £5 and can be booked on their website at [tinyurl.com/h6nkq96]. {24540}

Sent in by Philip Stevens

### COALVILLE (Leics)

The Dunelm store in the former Rex closed on 26 June. There have been calls for the building to be restored as a cinema. It opened in February 1938 with 1,200 seats in stalls and circle. It was twinned in May 1973 and films ceased in May 1984. {23119}

[Leicester Mercury](#) – 16 June; sent in by Peter Lea;

**SIX more pages of cinema news  
in the full Bulletin**



## CINEMA BUSINESS

### ODEON SALE

The Odeon & UCI Cinemas Group with 242 cinemas (2,236 screens) in seven countries has been sold to the US chain AMC for £921 million. AMC is controlled by the Chinese Dalian Wanda Group and has 385 sites, mainly in the USA. The deal would have cost £122m more before the Brexit vote.

*Daily Express, Daily Mail, The Times – 13 July; sent in by Alan Body, Keith Bye, Carl Chesworth, David Gammage, Geoff Gill, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson*

### PINEWOOD PROFITS

Pinewood Studios in Buckinghamshire reported profits of £7.8m in the year to 31 March, up from £4.9m a year earlier. It hosted 7 of the top 25 films of 2015, including *Spectre* and the latest *Star Wars* film. Filming for the next *Star Wars* episode has already taken place at Pinewood. The company's shares have gone up 29% since February after it announced it was considering putting itself up for sale.

*Daily Mail, [cityam.com] – 12 July; Slough Observer – 3 August; sent in by Keith Bye, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson*

### EVERYMAN

Everyman Cinema Group has completed its refurbishment of former Odeon sites at Esher, Gerards Cross and Barnet and said they are trading well. There is now planning permission to add two more screens to Muswell Hill, which is currently being refurbished. The group has also exchanged contracts for new cinemas in Horsham, Durham and Wokingham.

*Daily Mail – 12 July; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### CURZON

Curzon Cinemas is aiming to grow the digital side of the business and sees it eventually competing with the likes of Netflix and Amazon Prime.

*[cityam.com] – 27 June; sent in by R David Simpson*

### VUE PROFITS

Vue Cinemas, which runs 211 venues in 10 countries, saw turnover rise by 4.4% to £381.8m in the six months to 26 May, with profits up 5.7% to £77.8m. The company said the rollout of recliner seats helped draw in audiences.

*Daily Mirror – 20 July; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### CINEWORLD PROFITS

Cineworld's profits were up 48% to £100m last year, boosted by blockbusters such as *Star Wars*. Admissions were up 13% to 93.6 million and that helped boost revenue by 14% to £706m. Its UK box office hit £312m with a further £107m spent at concession stands. The group opened 18 new cinemas in 2015 and have refurbished 16 with 4DX technology.

Later news shows revenues for the first six months of 2016 were up 8.4% to £356.7m compared with £329.1m a year earlier. Audience numbers were up 2.7% to 46.1m, roughly the population of Spain. Customers spent £53.5m on popcorn and drinks – that's an average of £2.30 each. The company said that the weeks following Brexit were particularly strong for admissions.

*The Times – 11 March; Evening Standard – 11 August; Daily Mail, The i – 12 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth, David Daykin, Geoff Gill, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson*

### CINEWORLD'S EMPIRE

Cineworld Group plc has announced the acquisition of five cinemas from Cinema Holdings Limited, the holding company of Empire Cinema Limited and the sale to Empire of the three-screen Cineworld Haymarket. Cineworld will pay Empire an aggregate consideration of £94 million for the transaction. The cinemas purchased are:

- the nine-screen Empire Leicester Square, a leading London West End venue for movie premières, which has a Laser IMAX screen,
- an 18-screen multiplex in Basildon, which has an IMAX screen,
- a 17-screen multiplex in Hemel Hempstead, which has an IMAX screen,
- a 16-screen multiplex in Poole, which has an IMAX screen and
- a 4-screen cinema (ex Odeon) in Bromley in Greater London.

The Leicester Square, Basildon, Hemel Hempstead and Poole cinemas will take on Cineworld branding, while management is considering converting the Bromley cinema into a Picturehouse to make optimum use of its size and location.

*Cineworld Press Release – 28 July; local newspapers from relevant locations; sent in by Carl Chesworth, Ray Dolling, John Forster, Geoff Gill, Peter Knight & Philip Stevenscit*

## MISCELLANY

### BRIGHTON SHORTS

Short films made by pupils at a Brighton primary school were screened at the Odeon. They were given free hire of an auditorium so they could see their work on the big screen.

*Brighton & Hove News – 17 July; sent in by Geoff Gill*

### END OF VHS

Japanese technology company Funai Electric – thought to be the last manufacturer of VHS recorders – has produced its final machine. Introduced in the 1970s, video tapes have given way to DVDs and Blu-ray in popularity over the last 20 years. Despite the lifetime guarantee to re-record that was once offered on cassettes, it looks like video tapes will fade away into history.

*Daily Telegraph – 22 July; Sunday Post – 24 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Tom Lauchlan, who adds:*

Many CTA members will no doubt have a collection of videos made between 1972 and 2000 and should not dispose of them, despite the news that the machines will no longer be built. A great many films released on VHS have not been released on DVD for financial and contractual reasons. Also, those released on DVD today have often been edited for political correctness and therefore are not as complete as on the original VHS. This is just another ploy of manufacturers getting more by making equipment obsolete before its time; they are working on new equipment that will in the end make DVD obsolete too!

### SOHO



Porn baron Paul Raymond's legacy lives on as his Soho Estates property company plans to put its boardroom behind the famous neon sign that once advertised his *Raymond Revuebar*. Many of the sex shops in the vicinity have closed as the area has evolved.

*[cityam.com] – 29 July; sent in by Keith Bye*

### REMEMBERING ERIC

We published an obituary of ABC Futurist Liverpool projectionist Eric Northgate on p27 of Bulletin 49/6. Now, a year after his death, former employees held a charity screening of his favourite film *Singin' in the Rain* to raise funds for Clatterbridge Cancer Charity in his memory. It was held at the Light cinema in New Brighton.

*Stage Screen and Radio – August/September; sent in by Mike Taylor*

### THE DWARFS THAT DISNEY REJECTED

Walt Disney himself decided on the choice of names for Snow White's famous seven in 1937. He chose Grumpy, Sleepy, Sneezy, Dopey, Happy, Bashful and Doc after rejecting names like Tubby, Baldy, Deafy, Shorty, Wheezy, Burpy, Lazy, Jumpy, Dizzy, Nifty and Puffy. The early character sketches were among 32 pieces of artwork that have come to light as part of an auction in New York. The dwarf drawings were part of a selection of *Snow White* pieces that sold for \$80,000.

*Daily Mail – 1 July; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### BAD BREATH?

Scientists have sampled the gases in a cinema's ventilation duct and found it is possible not only to identify the film the audience is watching but also the individual scenes in the film. We breathe out not only carbon dioxide but also acetone and isoprene in a ratio that varies with our state. Some of the clearest data came from *the Hunger Games*. It has been suggested that films could be given ratings based on gas readings; they could say "People were frightened four times in this film."

*The Times – 2 June; sent in by R David Simpson*



# LETTERS

## EMERGENCY!

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Western Electric SERVICE TAKE THIS CARD TO THE TELEPHONE TROUBLE - 7.9 WESTERN 340

I was interested to see Carl Chesworth's Westrex engineers' monthly service itinerary sheet for March 1970 in the last Bulletin. Above is a copy of the card issued to cinemas in the 1940s by Western Electric (before being rebranded Westrex), which refers to these service itinerary sheets and on which details of the equipment were to be written, to be readily to hand in case an emergency phone call had to be made.

Kevin Whealan

## DATES

Some dates that I think need putting in the Bulletin. The actual closure date of Odeon Marble Arch was 23 April 2016. It is believed that a six-screen Odeon will emerge as part of the development. The closure date of the Cineworld Hammersmith was 8 May 2016. I believe a three-screen Curzon will emerge from this one.

Tim McCullen

## BEST OF BERKSHIRE



Metro Banks usually have a large illuminated photograph of the Main Street of the town they're in, inside the branch. Noticing that Windsor included the Regal cinema, I was pleased to find that the staff were only too happy to run off this copy for me.

The August issue of *Best of British* magazine has a spread of four vintage postcards from the Francis Frith collection, showing cinemas. They include the Ambassador Slough, with comments from a former projectionist.

R David Simpson

## THANKS

My thanks to Adam Unger and Richard Gray for responding to my letter requesting an update on the demolition of Earls Court in London – see p22 last Bulletin. If any members have any interesting photos of the demolition of the building, ie the lowering of the roof, the Warwick Road and Old Brompton Road frontage etc I would be very interested in purchasing them; a full refund of costs and postage would be made.

RW Hawkins, 19b Brodrick Avenue, GOSPORT, PO12 2EN

## MANCHESTER PARAMOUNT

I passed the old Odeon/ Paramount in Manchester the other day and the lower part of the building is boarded-off, with signs announcing "Demolition by Bowmer Kirkland". The current work is to remove the last traces of asbestos (a worker on site tells me the place is riddled with it – I could have told them that) and then total demolition of the building, to be replaced with an(other) office block, to complement the 'new' one adjacent. They were amazed at the number of safes that were left in the building! Somewhere, in the roof void above the old circle (Odeon ①) a bunch of keys was lost and, despite frequent searches over 25 years of the various nooks and crannies of that area, these keys ('the main bunch' as they were known), were never found. The keys were replaced from 'master keys' but the sadness was a large metal key tag on the ring, reading "Paramount Theatre Manchester" which dated from the 1930s. There will be another link to the original building, with an enamel plaque in the electrical substation reading Paramount Cinema Manchester Sub-Station.

Carl Chesworth

## KINGS OF THE HIGH STREET

As somebody who thoroughly enjoyed working in traditional High Street cinemas for twenty years and who also believes that they can still play a major role in modern day cinema going I was delighted to read in CTA E-newsletter no 429 that the Everyman Cinema chain wants to expand their circuit by buying and rebranding yet more former cinemas.

According to Crispin Lilly, their chief executive, Everyman hopes to open five new sites a year for the next three years. "If anyone thinks they have got an existing cinema and wants to move on, or an old bingo hall, we're interested," said Lilly in a *Guardian* interview. "There's something in the walls that comes out that you can't manufacture." Everyman currently owns sixteen cinemas, following the purchase last year of four former Odeons at Muswell Hill, Barnet, Gerrards Cross and Esher.

Everyman is joining a growing band of cinema operators who are having a renewed faith in traditional High Street sites rewarded. I find this a refreshing trend and one that makes perfect sense. I have never understood the mentality that prevailed for so long that our often faded, yet still majestic, cinemas were relics of a bygone age. Lack of investment, bad management at a senior level and corporate greed – too many freeholds and leaseholds were needlessly sold to realise a quick buck – were, in my opinion, often the cause of a cinema closing. I experienced this at first hand when two of the major brand owned sites I worked at in Portsmouth were closed down despite still turning a profit.

My local independent cinema is the Picturedrome Bognor Regis, part of Adam Cunard's Electric Theatre chain of cinemas. The five cinemas in this circuit are all old, traditional High Street sites that have been lavishly refurbished, had the latest technology installed and are now attracting record audiences. The power of multiplexes will never diminish but traditional cinemas still have much to offer. It's a shame that the famous Odeon chain has been so happy to off-load many of its glorious buildings in recent years; I truly believe they could have retained many of their town centre sites and still be the huge profitable player that they are.

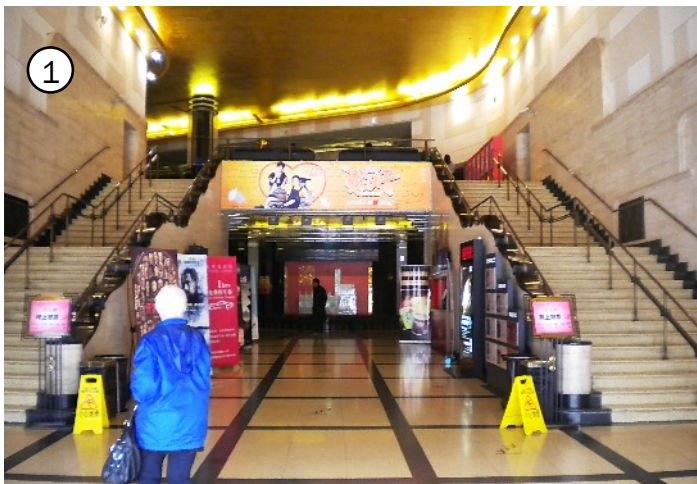
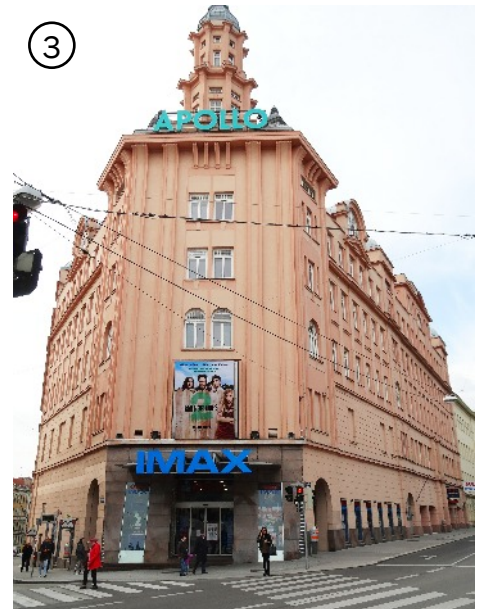
Cinemas have always been the heartbeat of a High Street and when they close surrounding businesses always suffer. Everyman should be commended for investing in old cinemas and giving High Streets hope. It's just a shame that they concentrate solely on attracting the upper end of the market. Lilly, in that *Guardian* article, admitted that when he said they were targeting people prepared to pay extra and that only teenagers were not interested in them. That's a shame because cinema is for everyone, old and young, rich or poor. Charging as much as £18 a ticket, which Everyman does, is wrong in my opinion as local High Streets cater for all types without prejudice or exclusion. That's something cinemas should always do as well.

Mike Whitcombe

More letters in the full Bulletin



# HOLIDAY SNAPS



## SHANGHAI BY BRIAN HALL

1. Grand Theatre, People's Square; 2. Peace Cinema

## VIENNA BY JOHN SKINNER

3. Apollo IMAX; 4. Haydn English Language Cinema;  
5. Erotik Kino; 6. Burg Kino; 7. Film Casino