

50
years

CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

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CTA is 50



The interior of the Granada Tooting in 1967, the first ever CTA visit, which we will be repeating in February; see p3
photo courtesy John Sharp, taken 27 November 1967

FROM YOUR EDITOR

You can't fail to have noticed that the CTA celebrates 50 years of its existence this year. You should already have received the celebratory issue of *Picture House* and seen the many special articles therein from Committee members and others. We will also be including anniversary material in the Bulletin throughout the year. Your responses to any feature in either magazine are welcomed and encouraged. If you send them to me, I will print them in the Bulletin during the year. I have booked my tickets for the 30 January event so, unless there's a rail strike or heavy snow, I look forward to meeting some of you.

I would like to personally thank all the previous Bulletin editors; Anthony Slide, Marcus Eavis, Allen Eyles and Les Bull; there are details and a history of our publications in *Picture House*. I have been editor since late 1998 but I would like to retire at some stage soon, so if you feel like taking over the reins, please let me know.

One of the things we will feature throughout the year are cinematic events that took place in 1967. I must apologise for the poor quality of some of the photos used to illustrate these events – but they are 50 years old! I would like to thank Ken Roe for his help in compiling these lists. If anyone knows the dates of any of the unknown entries, please let me know. There is so much material in this issue that, even at a record-equalling 36 pages, I have only a little room for holiday snaps. I have also had to hold over a couple of articles. If you have sent in material, please accept my thanks and rest assured that I will print it eventually.

When sending in material, please don't forget to include the source and date of the information. If you send in a physical press cutting or Internet printout, please include the bit with the newspaper or page name and date on, or simply write it in the margin. At the risk of repeating myself, please ensure any images you send are of sufficient resolution. Aim for 300dpi; as a guide, if the file size is less than 100kb, it's probably too small.

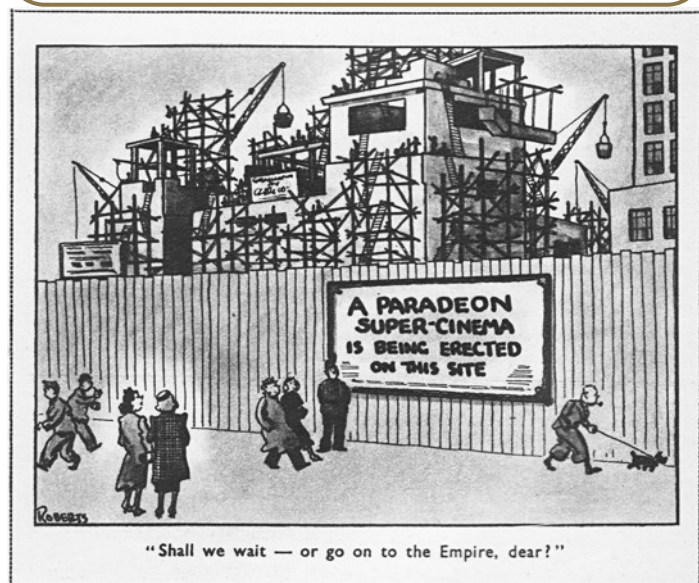
A reminder what the numbers in curly brackets eg {14666} mean. They are the reference to the cinema's page on the Cinema Treasures website. Go to cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn where {nnnnn} is the number in curly brackets.

Finally, one item of errata from the last edition. In the necrology on p31 I mistyped the name of the *Sound of Music* actress [not accretes]; of course her name is Charmian Carr. I must get a new keyboard!

A Happy New Year to you all.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

CARTOON CORNER



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

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

MONDAY 20 FEBRUARY

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor.

It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise;

items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor.

Please enclose SAE and state if you require items to be returned,

otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.

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

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

Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby

Printed by The Ludo Press Ltd, 18 Wimbledon Stadium Business Centre,
Riverside Road, London, SW17 0BA [www.ludo.co.uk]

CTA 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Still time to join the great day!

Monday 30 January

Organised by Allen Eyles

Join us to celebrate fifty years of the Cinema Theatre Association on the same day of the year that the inaugural meeting was held at the **National Film Theatre** (now **BFI Southbank**) in 1967.

50 Years of the Cinema Theatre Association

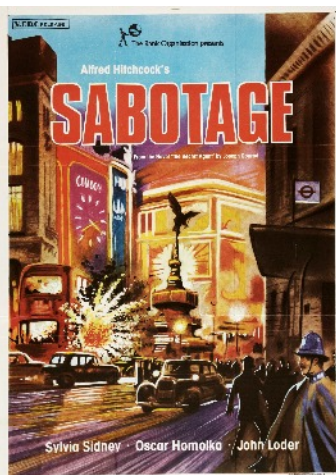
BFI Southbank, NFT1, Waterloo, London SE1, 11am

Fifty years on from the inaugural meeting of the CTA in the very same building, we will look back at the situation in 1967 that prompted its formation, highlight what the CTA has achieved over the five decades and ask what the future holds for our organisation. This richly illustrated joint presentation will feature some of the CTA's leading officers – Chairman David Trevor-Jones, Casework Chair Richard Gray and founder member / magazine editor Allen Eyles – along with comments from the audience.

Sabotage (1936)

BFI Southbank, NFT1, Waterloo, London SE1, 2pm

A loose adaptation of Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, this British classic from Alfred Hitchcock uses an independent cinema as its central setting – unknown to the audience, its proprietor M Verloc, is plotting acts of terrorism with his gang. Located in Camberwell, to judge by a letterhead seen in the film, the cinema was entirely a studio recreation. Typically, Hitchcock makes use of the cinema setting to further his aims with a film can being used to carry a bomb on a crowded bus and a Disney cartoon on screen that reflects events off. Hollywood actress Sylvia Sydney co-stars as the wife of Oscar Homolka's anarchist with John Loder as the lurking detective.



Evening Double Bill:

The Birth of the Cinema + The Birth of the CTA

Regent Street Cinema, 309 Regent Street (north of Oxford Circus), 6:30pm

Where better to celebrate the birth of the CTA than at the birthplace of film exhibition in this country? We will start with a very short introduction to the **Regent Street Cinema** (previously the **Cameo-Poly** art house) and we will be screening some of the Lumière shorts (as recently restored – first UK public showing) from that first film show in 1896 in the very same space (since modernised in 1927 and again in 2015). After some brief reflections on the first 50 years of the CTA and the introduction of some special guests we will also show extracts from some memorable short films about our cinema heritage: hopefully, *Odeon Cavalcade* and *An Acre of Seats in a Garden of Dreams* (both 1973). The organ will be played before the start of the show, so arrive early.



You are invited to toast the future of the CTA with a glass of wine or other light refreshment and enjoy a piece of celebratory cake, both free of charge, in the cinema's bar during the break between shows.

The Final Reel (2016)

Regent Street Cinema, 309 Regent Street (north of Oxford Circus), 8:45pm

We are delighted to host the London première of this brand-new feature-length documentary narrated by the actor Sir John Hurt, which tells the story of how cinemas and cinema-going developed and flourished over the years in Norfolk as a microcosm of what has happened throughout the country. We meet some of the colourful entrepreneurs that are a key part of this narrative and hear the tales of how they kept cinemas going. And we hear from the projectionists, as well as audience members – for many of whom their local cinema was their favourite place in the world. *The Final Reel* offers a rich mix of interviews, photographs and an astonishing amount of archive film material in a most entertaining way, accurately covering in 94 minutes the story of exhibition from the beginning to the multiplex and IMAX. The screening will be attended by producer/director Jonathan Blagrove.



Important Booking Information:

Tickets must be booked through the appropriate venues: **BFI Southbank** or **Regent Street Cinema**.

Tickets for the two BFI Southbank daytime events are free for Seniors (over 60), normal prices otherwise. Go to [bfi.org.uk/whatson] or telephone 020 7928 3232 (11:30 to 20:30 daily) or in person (11:00 to 20:30 daily).

Tickets for the evening shows at the **Regent Street Cinema** can be obtained online at [regentstreetcinema.com] or telephone 020 7911 5050 or in person. The double-bill of both evening programmes costs £16 (over 55s pay £14) or, for one show only, £12 (£11).

A CTA 50th Anniversary Visit – Return to the Tooting Granada (Gala Bingo)

Sunday 26 February ; organised by Ken Roe

To continue our 50th Anniversary celebrations, members and associate members are invited to join us at the **Granada Theatre, Tooting** (now **Gala Bingo & Grade I Listed**). The reason we choose Tooting is that 'day & date' it also celebrates the first ever CTA visit, which was to the **Granada Tooting** on Sunday 26 February 1967.

Membership was small in that first year and 15 members attended, to see the building, which was, then still operating as a cinema. We can't establish what the film programme was on that day but the following week was a Paramount Pictures revival double bill *Psycho* & *War of the Worlds*. This was the third **Granada Theatre** to be built (after **Dover & Walthamstow**) and was opened on Monday 7 September 1931 with the Paramount Picture *Monte Carlo* starring Jeanette MacDonald & Jack Buchanan and *Two Crowded Hours*, a British short film directed by Michael Powell. The Wurlitzer organ was opened by organist Alex Taylor. With all 3,104 seats filled to capacity, over 2,000 were waiting outside, unable to gain entry! It was designed by architect Cecil Aubrey Masey with a splendid Gothic style interior the work of Russian born theatre set designer Theodore Komisarjevsky. The **Granada Tooting** became the flagship of the circuit.

Films were supplemented by concerts, stage shows, pantomimes, circus (with live animals) and even wrestling, which kept the **Granada** open until it was suddenly closed as a cinema on 10 November 1973 (it had been Grade II* Listed in June 1972). The final films were an Italian western *A Man Called Noon* starring Richard Crenna and Stephen Boyd and *Perfect Friday* starring Ursula Andress and Stanley Baker. The following week's film was advertised as *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* but it never happened. Proposals were put forward to demolish and build offices on the site but thankfully these were not



The hall of mirrors at the Granada Tooting

carried out. The building lay unused until 14 October 1976 when it reopened as a Granada Bingo Club. In May 1991 it became a Gala Bingo Club. It was given Grade I Listed status on 28 September 2000, the only 1930s cinema to be given this honour.

Prior to the visit to the Granada, Ken will take us on a short walking tour looking at the exteriors of other local former cinemas, including the Odeon Balham (wine shop), Classic Tooting Bec (carpet store & nightclub), Mayfair (ABC) Tooting (Muslim community centre) and Electric Palace (Asian community hall).

Arrangements: Meet at 3pm at Clapham South (Northern Line) tube (for the Odeon Balham). You will need a Zones 1-3 Oyster card to travel, as we will then travel by tube (2 stops) to Tooting Bec and then walk to the Granada. For those who wish to go straight to the Granada, we will meet there at 4pm; please do not enter the building before 4pm as bingo will be in session! Take the Northern Line to Tooting Broadway and turn right out of the station, the Granada (Gala Bingo) is 100 yards on the right, along Mitcham Road. The visit will end at 6pm.

Booking: This is a free visit for CTA members and Associate members only. Please register your intention of attending by telephoning the Visits Registration number 0208 800 8393 leaving your name(s), membership/associate number(s) and contact number on the answering machine. Registration for the visit will close on 18 February.

Coming Soon

After the Final Curtain

Date to be confirmed; organised by Richard Norman

An illustrated talk by Matt Lambros, who recently launched his book *After the Final Curtain* in the USA. Matt is a professional photographer with an interest in theatrical architecture. His book contains stunning images of movie palaces showing how they appeared shortly after their final closure.

The event will be held at The Gallery, Farringdon.

Further details will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin.

North by North East

26-29 April

CTA North is planning a four-day event to revisit some favourite Cinemas and Theatres in the beautiful North East and include new venues in the Scottish Borders during 26 to 29 April 2017. Still very much in the planning stage, we hope to include a visit to Darlington and the 'under restoration' Civic Theatre along with the best remaining buildings in Durham with a visit to the famous Beamish Museum to hear of their plans to build a 1950s village and relocate a Cinema on the site. We plan to travel via Newcastle to Alnwick, Berwick and the Borders returning via the romantic Northumberland Coast to Darlington. The visit will be designed to allow members to travel from the South of the UK and return home within the dates selected. Hotel accommodation will be in three different locations and therefore it is only practical to travel on the coach, leaving any personal vehicles in Darlington at a safe car park. The hotels earmarked will have character and therefore some rooms will be different in size and non-standard. There will be a single supplement applied where needed but members should enjoy the locality of where we stay and evening meals will be included in the package. To register your interest please send a stamped addressed envelope to:

David Eve, CTA North, 3 Barberry Bank, Egerton, Bolton, BL7 9UJ.

A Trip Down Memory Lane

To mark the CTA's 50th Anniversary

Saturday 11 March at 5:30pm;

organised by Richard Norman

PROGRAMME

A special Members' Slide Show and Social event has been arranged to reflect a varied selection of our past national and international CTA visits and tours from edited movies taken by members themselves. An opportunity to relive some memorable experiences and see some members' participation.

We hope also to include short presentations of some members' slides.

Doors Open: 5:00pm for a start at 5:30pm

Venue: The Gallery at Alan Baxter's, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EL.

Admission on the door:

Members and Guests: £8 each
(Members presenting a show: no charge.)

Admission includes entry to a raffle and light refreshments and drinks.

The CTA Bookstall will be available.

Getting there: On leaving Farringdon (old) station (not the Turnmill Street exit), turn left – or when leaving Farringdon Main Line station, turn right – and 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 the steps and you're there!

CTA Film Nites

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

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

Help Wanted

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

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

Other (non CTA) events are on p22

CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II Listed

The owner of the *Royalty* in Harborne [Birmingham] has formulated a scheme that would replace the majority of the structure with sheltered housing. However, a trust formed with the objective of assuring retention of the cinema as an entertainment venue has now submitted its own scheme to the local Council; it reportedly has a commercial partner and additionally is applying to the National Lottery for funding.



Following revisions to the proposal to replace the Astoria in Brighton with a housing scheme, the Council has dropped its objections thereto. Demolition thus appears to be imminent, as local objections are unfortunately centred upon disruption during redevelopment, not upon loss of a local amenity.

Photo above taken March 2009.

Despite representations from the Association, Leeds Council's Planning Panel enthusiastically passed plans for the proposed renovation of the *Majestic*, currently derelict following major damage from a conflagration.

Agreement has reportedly been reached between the cinema operator and the developer of the premises above the Curzon in London's Mayfair apropos installation of sound insulation therein.

An enquiry has been received from a curator at the Black Country Museum concerning the private cinema at Wordsley Hall near Stourbridge. Information has been forwarded, including details of a local contact.

Unlisted



The custodian of panels from the frieze originally located on the façade of the Gaumont Palace in Doncaster has enquired if the CTA might express interest in their acquisition. Efforts are to be made to liaise with various parties in an attempt to secure a suitable position for their relocation and display on a site accessible to the public, in manner akin to the reliefs from the frontage of the Gaumont Palace in Cheltenham.

Photo above taken September 2009, just after the cladding was removed.

Despite extant planning permission for redevelopment of the derelict *Regal* at Lichfield for housing, which would entail retention only of the façade, a local group wishes to revive the building as a cinema. It is to be advised of several successful projects that it may find helpful to consider and compare.



Similarly, permission to demolish the Regal in Wakefield was given in 2014 but a local campaigner is now attempting to save the building, which boasts a highly creditable auditorium by William Glen.

Photo above taken July 2004; interior photo on p29 Bulletin 42/2.



A new planning application has been submitted for the site of Pyke's Cinematograph Theatre in London's Shepherd's Bush. Although the façade would be retained, the significant terracotta plaque [above] on the building's flank wall would, somewhat bizarrely, be replaced with a replica. The Association and The Victorian Society are amongst objectors.



It was understood that conversion of the Odeon at Redhill to a supermarket and residential accommodation would retain the frontage but this is not borne out by the plans. An objection is thus to be submitted.

Photo above taken April 2004; see also p22 Bulletin 50/4.



A decision on the fate of the Futurist in Scarborough is set to be taken at the end of February during a meeting of the local Council, which body has previously expressed a desire to demolish the theatre and replace it with a theme park.

Photo above taken August 2007; see Newsreel p28.



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 2015 are £4.00 per year (6 issues); individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2016 and 2017 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.



Still Available (reviewed in previous issues)

Haunted Cinemas and their Uninvited Guests

by Martin Tapsell. £7.50 plus postage.

The Golden Age of Folkestone's Cinemas

by Ricky Hart. £12.50 plus postage.

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.

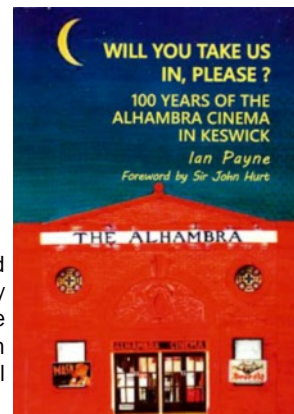
Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

Will You Take Us In, Please?

100 years of the Alhambra Cinema in Keswick

by Ian Payne. 208 pages. A5 paperback, fully illustrated. £10.00 from: Bookcase, 17-18 Castle Street, Carlisle, CA3 8SY or: [www.bookscumbria.com]

Published in 2016 but not mentioned here before, this comprehensive history relates the story of the Alhambra in the Lake District town of Keswick, which opened in January 1914 and is still operating today.

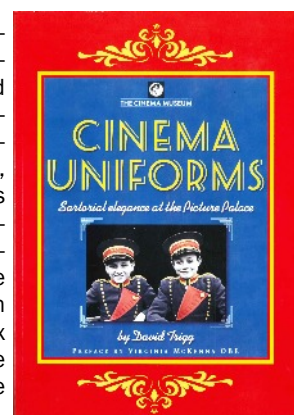


Cinema Uniforms

Sartorial Elegance at the Picture Palace

by David Trigg. 200 pages, A4 paperback, fully illustrated. £20.00. Available from the Cinema Museum, 2 Dugard Way, London, SE11 4TH.

First published in 2014 but not mentioned here before, this is a well-produced and thoroughly researched survey of this important aspect of cinema history. There is a wealth of illustrations in colour and black and white, showing both items from the Museum's collection and also period advertisements and trade catalogues of the varied uniforms. There is a comprehensive appendix of over 250 news items from the trade press and a further appendix listing over 100 companies who were active in cinema uniform manufacture from 1908 to 1958.



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.

WHEN THE CTA WAS FOUNDED IN 1967...

Some Historical Highlights

- Harold Wilson was Prime Minister.
- Lyndon B Johnson was President of the USA.
- The first North Sea Gas was pumped ashore.
- The Eurovision Song Contest is won by Sandie Shaw with *Puppet on a String* – the first English Language song to win.
- The Liverpool RC Cathedral was consecrated.
- Tottenham Hotspur won the FA Cup, beating Chelsea 2-1.
- Barclays Bank installed the first ATM at its Enfield Branch.
- We still had pounds, shillings and pence [£/s/d]; decimal currency didn't come in until February 1971.
- You could buy 4 gallons of petrol for £1.
- The average price of a UK Cinema Ticket was 4s/4½d [21¾p].
- Parliament decriminalised homosexuality in England & Wales.
- Most of the British Steel industry was nationalised.
- The breathalyser was introduced.
- Playwright Joe Orton was murdered.
- Elvis Presley married Priscilla Beaulieu.
- The Beatles released the album *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.
- *The Prisoner*, *The Forsythe Saga* and *The Monkees* were on TV.
- Britain devalued the pound by lowering the exchange rate from \$2.80 to \$2.40.
- The World's first heart transplant is performed in South Africa.
- *A Man for all Seasons* wins the Oscar for Best Picture.
- The liner *QE2* was launched by The Queen at Clydebank and the liner *Queen Mary* was retired.
- St Pancras Railway Station was made a grade I listed building.
- Radio 1 begins broadcasting.
- The first colour TV broadcasts began on BBC2.
- The Concorde was unveiled in Toulouse, France.
- Ed Balls, Vin Diesel, Paul Gascoigne, Stelios Haji-Ioannou, Paul Ince, Nicole Kidman, Julia Roberts [and others] were born.
- Clement Atlee, Donald Campbell, Vivien Leigh, Derek McCulloch [Uncle Mac], Arthur Ransome, Basil Rathbone, Malcolm Sargent [and others] died.

A Selection of Films Released

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| • A Countess from Hong Kong | • Risky Business |
| • A Guide for the Married Man | • Rough Night in Jericho |
| • Barefoot in the Park | • The Collector |
| • Bedazzled | • The Comedians |
| • Belle de Jour | • The Dirty Dozen |
| • Billion Dollar Brain | • The Fearless Vampire Killers |
| • Bonnie and Clyde | • The Gnome-Mobile |
| • Camelot | • The Graduate |
| • Carry on Doctor | • The Happiest Millionaire |
| • Carry On... Follow That Camel | • The Honey Pot |
| • Casino Royale | • The Jokers |
| • Cool Hand Luke | • The Jungle Book |
| • Custer of the West | • The Mummy's Shroud |
| • Death Rides a Horse | • The Night of the Generals |
| • Doctor Dolittle | • The Peking Medallion |
| • Far from the Madding Crowd | • The Plank |
| • Guess Who's Coming to Dinner | • The Producers |
| • Half a Sixpence | • The Sorcerers |
| • Hombre | • The Taming of the Shrew |
| • How I Won the War | • The Way West |
| • How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying | • Thoroughly Modern Millie |
| • In Cold Blood | • To Sir, With Love |
| • In Like Flint | • Tobruk |
| • In the Heat of the Night | • Two for the Road |
| • Maroc 7 | • Up the Down Staircase |
| • Our Mother's House | • Valley of the Dolls |
| • Playtime | • Wait Until Dark |
| • Point Blank | • You Only Live Twice |
| • Quatermass and the Pit | |
| • Reflections in a Golden Eye | |

These are only some of the more popular ones; IMDb lists 2,907!

Rank sells 46 cinemas to Classic

Allen Eyles writes in *Odeon Cinemas Vol2*: "In July 1967 Rank put up 47 Odeon and Gaumont cinemas as a going concern at an asking price of £1.75 million. Amongst the companies that expressed an interest was *Granada*, which had received a record of the cinemas' box-office takings for the previous two years."



The Odeon Morecambe in May 2008

"Listed by their 1966 takings, the cinemas were the Odeons at Ramsgate (top at £43,999), Llanelli, Allerton, Morecambe, Horsham, Crosby, Chingford, Loughborough, Accrington, Barrow-in-Furness, Weymouth, Boston, Gillingham, Falmouth, St Austell, Barnstaple, Stroud, Bridgewater, Chippenham, Camberley, Leigh, Erith, Littlehampton, Andover, Park Royal, Spalding, Farnborough (Rex), Alloa, Hawick, Sittingbourne, Herne Bay, Deal, Hatfield, Godalming, Burnage, Taunton, Faversham, Wishaw and Skipton (£12,887).

The Gaumont halls were at Partick (Tivoli), Wallasey, Yeovil, Tottenham (Palace), Hinckley, Airdrie (Pavilion), Frome and Redditch."

"What the properties seemed to have in common is that they were run-down and needed investment to carry on. Perhaps one or more plums were included to encourage buyers? *Granada* did express an interest in 38 of them but by that time (October 1967) *Classic* had made a successful bid of £1.6m for the lot, except the Tottenham Palace, which seems to have been withdrawn."

Brian Quilter, Managing Director of Rank Organisation Theatre Division said, "We are glad that these cinemas will be under the management of such a proven and well-respected group as *Classic*. They will take over the first 16 cinemas on 3 December, the next batch on 10 December and the last lot on 17 December."

Classic's Managing Director Eric Rhodes said that the cinemas would continue to be run as cinemas and the booking policy would be completely flexible – if a film wasn't good enough after a couple of days, it would be dropped and something else shown in its place. The company earmarked £500,000 to be spent over the next two years on improving the cinemas, all of which were to be renamed *Classic*. The *Classic* circuit then owned 91 cinemas, including 25 in the Greater London area, with eight of those in the West End.

Information from Allen Eyles' book *Odeon Cinemas Vol2* and *CTA Bulletin Vol1 No 5*



Your Editor in the box at the Odeon Morecambe in 1967, aged 20

TWO MONTHS OF CINEMA NEWS FROM 1967

Lists compiled by Harry Rigby & Ken Roe

January

- 2nd The Charity Première of *Hawaii* is held at the Astoria Charing Cross Road. {2499}
- 7th The 1,380-seat Regal in Belfast closes and was eventually demolished. {43775}
- 9th The 556-seat Pavilion in Abergavenny [Monmouth] closes and becomes a bingo club. It is currently a church. {44562}
- 10th The Royal World Première of *The Countess from Hong Kong* is held at the Carlton Haymarket. {1838}
- 12th Films cease at the 840-seat Plaza in Wombwell [South Yorks] and bingo takes over. It had previously had a period on bingo for a few months in 1963. It is now used for snooker. {25845}
- 14th Films cease at the Essoldo in Low Fell, Gateshead and bingo takes over. It had been the first cinema to be equipped with Projectomatic in 1953. It had a further period of cinema use from 1973 to 1987 before being demolished. {52463}
- 17th The 1,203-seat Victory in Loughborough [Leics] closes with *The Exterminator*. It was demolished two years later. {40270}
- 21st The Essoldo [ex Belmont] in Kenton, North London closes with *A Touch of Mink*. It became a bingo club but that didn't last long before the building was demolished. {17999}
- 21st The 1,006-seat Essoldo at Barnet [Middlesex] closes with *My Fair Lady* and is demolished. {27529}
- 24th The Gala Première of *Murderers' Row* is held at the Leicester Square Theatre. {910}
- 27th The World Première of *The Night of the Generals* is held at the Odeon Leicester Square. {841}
- 28th The Royal Wallasey closes with *Day of the Triffids* and *King Kong versus Godzilla*. It became a bingo club, then snooker. {44942}
- 28th The 1,250-seat Forum on the Crumlin Road in Belfast closes. It was later used as a social club. {43773}
- 30th The Regent Bishops Stortford was renovated and renamed the Granada after being taken over in 1965. It eventually closed in 1977 in favour of bingo; this lasted until 1982 and the building was demolished soon after. {54351}
- 30th The Regal Wadebridge was taken over by WTW Cinemas; coincidentally Dr Beeching closed the Wadebridge to Padstow railway line on the same day {25803}



February

- 2nd The Odeon Marble Arch [London] opens with a giant curved screen, equipped for D-150 presentations, although the first film is *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum* in 35mm. {1830}



- 4th The 914-seat Essoldo in Sowerby Bridge [West Yorks] closes with Elvis Presley in *GI Blues*. The auditorium was eventually demolished but the façade has been retained. {36722}



The auditorium of the Scala Superama Derby

- 9th The 649-seat Scala Superama opens in Derby with *Khartoum* in 70mm. It was a subterranean road-show house, later to become the Odeon Pennine. {14666}
- 9th The Gala Première of *Accident* is held at the Leicester Square Theatre. {910}
- 10th The 1,260-seat Granada in Brixton [London] closed with *The Guns of Navarone*. It became a bingo club but was demolished in 1992. {22041}
- 10th The former 1,228-seat Odeon in the Blackheath area of Birmingham reopened as a bingo hall. It had closed as a cinema in 1960 and been a bowling alley. It later became a ballroom and DIY store but was demolished in 1984. {22196}
- 20th The 1,086-seat Ritz in Hورشam [Sussex] was renamed ABC. {3263}
- 27th Bradford's Theatre Royal reopens, equipped for 70mm. Its name was modified to Irving Royal after Sir Henry Irving, whose last performance was there in 1905, just prior to his death. After only eight months, Classic takes over. {38790}
- 27th The 21st Royal Film Performance featuring *The Taming of the Shrew* is held at the Odeon Leicester Square. {841}
- ?? The 798-seat Regal in Enniskillen [Northern Ireland] closed; it eventually became the Fermanagh Unionist Headquarters. It is understood the auditorium murals survive. {26720}



We will feature more cinema news from 1967 in every edition of the Bulletin this year. If anyone knows the exact dates of the ?? ones, please let your editor know. B&W photos from Kine Weekly 1967, scanned by Ken Roe



The Pavilion Abergavenny in April 2010 – see entry for 9 January

MORE CINEMA NEWS FROM 1967

Month Unknown

- The **Palladium** in Durham is modernised and reopens with *The Bible: In the Beginning*. {35690}
- The **Picture Palace** in Dudley Hill, Bradford, closes with *Thunderbirds Are Go*. It became a bingo club and is now a carpet store. {36724}
- The **Odeons Bristol** {24268} and **Reading** [Berks] {34959} are modernised.



The Aaben in Hulme, Manchester, around the time of closure

- The **Aaben** cinema in Hulme, Manchester closes and bingo takes over. This only lasts two years before it reopens as a cinema. It closed in 1991 and was demolished in 1993. {22901}
- The 1,124-seat **Victoria** cinema in Fleetwood [Lancs] closes. It reopens as a bingo club in September. {36672}
- The 890-seat **Studio** in Bletchley [Bucks] was taken over from S&K by ABC; it lasted until 1986, a casualty of the UK's first multiplex at Milton Keynes. {35859}
- A bingo club opened in the former **Empire** in Outwood, Wakefield, which had closed as a 750-seat cinema in 1964. The building is now a fish & chip restaurant. {36730}
- The **Plaza** on the Isles of Scilly closes. {23964}
- The 940-seat **Regent** in Bolton [Lancs] closes and is demolished. {45458}
- The **Compton** organ was removed from the 2,165-seat **Gaumont Finchley** [London]. {29620}
- The 800-seat **Paris** in Brighton was demolished after standing empty for four years, having closed in 1963. {39322}



The Vandyke, Fishponds, Bristol as a Wetherspoons pub in March 2006

- The 1,200-seat **Vandyke** cinema in the Fishponds district of Bristol was renamed **ABC Fishponds**. It eventually became a Wetherspoons pub. {21200}
- The former **Essoldo** in Canning Town [London] was demolished to build a flyover. It had closed in 1963 and been on bingo. {28056}
- The 915-seat **Alhambra** in Shotton [North Wales] closes and is eventually demolished. {51443}



The former Rex in Salford as a church in October 2005

- The 700-seat former **Rex** in Salford [then in Lancs] reopens as a bingo hall, having closed on film in 1958. {2116}
- The soon-to-be-demolished **Bedford** in London's Camden Town features in a film *The London Nobody Knows* with James Mason. {15083}
- Films cease at the 900-seat **Empire** in Crook [Durham] {43148} and at the 814-seat **Savoy** in Atherton [Lancs] {51001} and bingo takes over.
- The 2,429-seat **Globe Theatre** in Stockton on Tees is renamed **ABC**. They had operated it since 1937 with both stage shows and films. {1835}
- The 2,370-seat **Odeon** Edgware Road [London] closed for twinning. It reopened in February 1968 with a 1,116-seat cinema in the extended circle and bingo downstairs. {15742}
- The 1,080-seat **Studio 7** in Sheffield was modernised and a 'Vistarama' floating screen installed. It became the only cinema in Sheffield to show *Paint Your Wagon* in 70mm due to Paramount falling out with ABC for a time. {25490}
- The 1,250-seat **Embassy** in Maldon [Essex] was taken over by Star Cinemas and renamed **Studio One**. {30330}
- The 629-seat **Miners Welfare Hall** in Cwmlllynfell [South Wales] introduced part-time bingo. This mixed use policy lasted until 1970, when the building was closed. It has since been demolished. {30657}



The Pavilion Ashington, still on bingo in October 2006 [and today]

- The 1,000-seat **Pavilion** in Ashington [Northumberland] became a full-time bingo club, having been part-time films/bingo for several years. {44171}
- The 1,050-seat **Strand** in Londonderry [Northern Ireland] was refurbished and reopened as an **Odeon** with *The Sound of Music* in 70mm. It closed in 1975 and was demolished. {43801}
- The 1,250-seat **Savoy** on the Crumlin Road in Belfast closed and was converted into a car saleroom. {29885}
- The Council in Pickering [North Yorks] refuses to allow the town's only cinema, the **Castle**, to open on Sundays. {3379}

If anyone knows the exact dates of any of these events, please let your editor know.

FROM CTA BULLETIN VOLUME 1, 1967

The Alpha Picture Palace. St. Albans.

My father, Arthur Melbourne-Cooper, opened on July 27th 1908 the first all-picture house in Hertfordshire, the Alpha Picture Palace St. Albans.

The cinema (with a seating capacity of 800) was in the upper part of the building. The Hertfordshire Advertiser commented "a feature worthy of note is that the lower priced seats are in front and the better ones at the back. This arrangement was resented at first by the patrons of the higher priced seats, but when they found that the specially-raised floor gave them a better view than could be got from the front, they appreciated the innovation. The operator's box does not stand in the usual place inside the auditorium, it is a roomy apartment built out as an annexe, and therefore affords immunity from accident as well as interference by the public. There are also an operator's room and a manager's office."

On the ground floor of the building was a spacious well-furnished restaurant, a hairdressing salon and public baths.

Beside the paybox were phials of perfume (Pivot of Paris) from which the ladies could spray their handkerchiefs. Perfumed cards were also distributed. Cadburys contracted to supply the confectionery, and boxes of chocolates were specially made with the name "Alpha Picture Palace" embossed in gold on a red background.

Prices were 2d., 4d., and 6d. and free teas were provided for patrons during the matinees.

At the rear of the cinema hall were eight boxes - plush curtained and tastefully furnished with two chairs and a table - which could be reserved in advance for 2/6d. Comfortable tip-up seats were provided in all parts of the house (except the tuppennys) and an imposing proscenium was designed and executed by Fred Karno, of music hall fame.

"Boots" Martin, an ex-guardsman, was the first commissionaire, dressed in claret and gold uniform, and there were also three "chocolate boys" in green and gold uniforms, purchased from Cadburys after use at the Paris exhibition. A policeman was engaged nightly to deal with the rough element.

A large banner was strung across the road outside the cinema advertising the programme, and a man-lifting box-kite carrying advertising matter was also used during the daytime. The kite was subsequently purchased by Gordon Selfridge, for use in advertising his new store.

Audrey Wadowska

For Your Diary.

On December 5th, Mrs. Audrey Wadowska will give an illustrated talk on the films and cinemas of her father, Arthur Melbourne-Cooper. This meeting, in association with the Society for Film History Research, will be in the small cinema of the National Film Theatre, and commence at 7.30 p.m.

Plans are being finalised for a visit to an ABC cinema during November - more details later.

THE CTA'S GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

By Les Bull, a former *Bulletin* Editor

It's fifty years since Eric George, concerned at the way the picture houses of Britain were disappearing, advertised for people who felt the same to get in touch with a view to forming a group that would campaign for the protection of the buildings. Even then, of course, their time had passed and long before 1967 the writing had been on the wall for many cinemas: their best days had already gone. The huge picture palaces were suffering a lack of audiences to fill their sometimes two-thousand seats. In the mid-1960s a number of City centre cinemas had been subdivided; this was a continuing trend across the country that alarmed Eric and so, when his call for like-minded people brought in several replies, the Cinema Theatre Association was formed.

The beginnings were modest – a news sheet called the *Bulletin* was issued, typewritten and photocopied. The membership was small but keen and gradually more were attracted to the cause. Of course it was obvious that a tiny group of people could not halt the inevitable closures that were increasingly happening but what it could do – and has done – was begin a detailed history and photographic record of the country's cinemas.

When I took on the task of *Bulletin* Editor in 1984 there were fewer than 500 members and little did I realise that I would be doing the job for fourteen years! The Association's finances were tight at that time and the *Bulletin* consisted of just eight pages. Cheap paper was used; the print was confined to black, computer typesetting equipment was in its early stages and prone to crashing before the text had been written to disc. The committee's general meetings were always lively affairs and held in a variety of places: the Services Club near Marble Arch; rooms above the Leicester Square Theatre (Odeon West End); at the BFI in Piccadilly – anywhere that would have us.

As the membership increased and finances improved we were able to increase the number of pages in the *Bulletin* and (wow!) introduce spot colour and, later, photographs. Then a yearly publication, *Picture House*, was introduced that included higher quality photographs of cinema buildings as well as histories of them. Improved printing techniques meant that the Association's publications are now unrecognisable compared to the humble beginnings. The intensive research carried out by Allen Eyles led to the publication of the Odeon, Gaumont, ABC and Granada histories. His work on them makes them invaluable historical volumes. Without his thorough investigation I am sure such documentation would not exist.

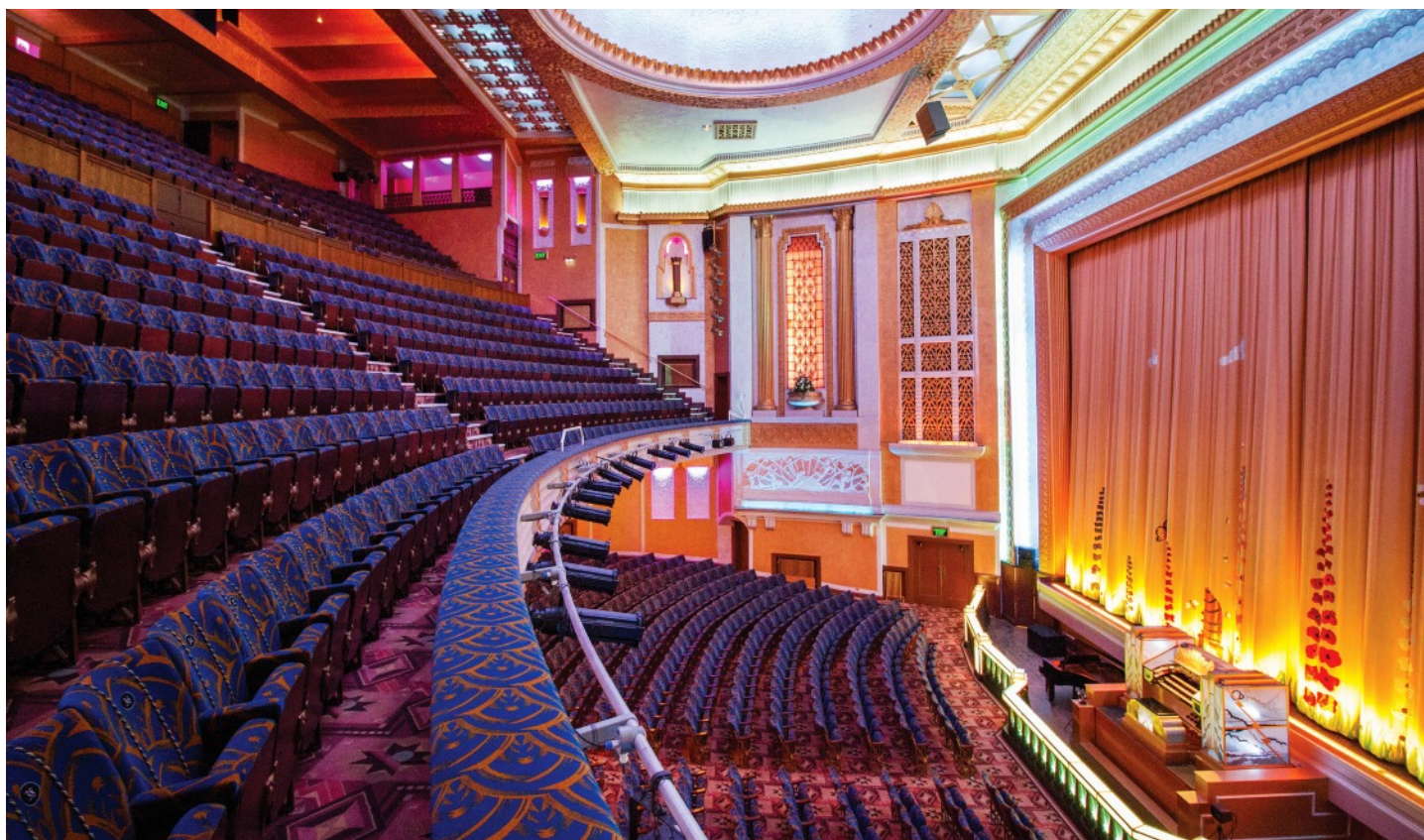
My own interest was in the traditional cinemas I had grown up with. I loved them all and was genuinely sad when, as Editor, each week brought news of another marvellous building being demolished or gutted for some other use. Depressing but the photographic record compiled by the CTA ensured that images of their original state were preserved.

For those who have no memory of those traditional picture houses it is impossible to convey the atmosphere they offered. So what have we lost? Those huge auditoria with drapes, festoon curtains, footlights, chandeliers; and the smaller ones with more modest interiors. Then there were the fleapits with their cheap admission prices, often-broken seating and almost non-existent heating. All in their way having a certain particular appeal. And all, with very few exceptions, long gone.

What else, apart from the actual buildings, did we lose? Well, we lost the tightly spaced seating, the poorly maintained and draughty auditoria. But we also lost continuous performances; programmes with a second feature; cinemas with stage facilities that enabled pop shows to come to urban areas at a modest price; cinemas with balconies; staff whose faces were familiar at every visit and of course a full evening of cheaply priced entertainment.

What have we swapped them for? The multiplexes have perfect picture quality, more comfortable seating, bigger screens and louder sound. They provide a large indoor waiting area. No longer do we have to queue in the street. We don't have to wait for movies to come round as they open everywhere mostly on the same day (can't call them films nowadays). Instead of two features we have half an hour of advertisements and trailers, warnings not to take photographs and to turn off our phones. But it would be churlish to deride what is now on offer as a vast amount of money has been spent building these multiplexes – and the rise in admissions proves that the majority of the public love them. But they are expensive: cinema-going is no longer the cheap night out it once was.

To me the CTA is my connection with those vanished times and hopefully the *Bulletin* and *Picture House* will continue to provide the nostalgia I feel for those disappeared buildings and the pleasure they gave. They had their day and now it's gone but the CTA has made sure they are not forgotten.



The interior of the Plaza Stockport – just the sort of cinema the author is talking about; now thankfully preserved; photo courtesy Plaza

WEST END VISIT REPORTS

By Adam Unger

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE – 26 OCTOBER 2016;
ORGANISED BY RAY RITMEESTER

This visit attracted a good number of members. It was led by Mark Fox, who gave a detailed history of the Grade II* listed theatre. This included going outside, where Mark explained the previous theatres on the site going back to 1705. The present theatre opened in 1897, designed by CJ Phipps for actor-manager Herbert Beerbohm Tree, conceived as a symmetrical block with the adjoining Carlton Hotel (replaced in 1957 by New Zealand House). We also walked through the charming, earlier, surviving Royal Opera Arcade of 1818 by John Nash, at the rear of the theatre.

Coming back inside, a lot of stair climbing was involved in order to access the interior of the dome, now known as the Dome Room, where originally Beerbohm Tree had his 'acting academy'. The lavish auditorium in French Renaissance style, seating some 1,200 on four levels, decorated by Romaine Walker, features an elaborate proscenium frame with three tiers of boxes framed by Corinthian columns. We were able to explore the understage area, which contains important early wooden stage machinery, cleverly incorporating later machinery for *The Phantom of the Opera*, which has now been running for 30 years.



The auditorium of Her Majesty's Theatre from the stage

THE LONDON PALLADIUM – 7 NOVEMBER 2016;
ORGANISED BY ADAM UNGER

This was our second visit this year to the Palladium, following on from the first one in April. Once again, we were most fortunate in having Mark Fox as our guide. Speaking as somebody attending this tour for the second time, I found as much to enjoy as on the first occasion, with Mark taking a different route this time along with a slightly different script. There is no doubt that everybody enjoyed it.



The grand staircase and one of the bar areas at the Palladium

HOLIDAY SNAPS



The Ciné-Teatro in Loulé, Faro, Portugal
Opened 1930, still a single screen with 310 seats on 3 levels
Sent in by Terry Bradbury



The former Majestic Singapore
now in use as an indoor market, locally listed {38787}
Sent in by Stewart Kidd

WILF SEARCHES FOR THE KINEMA

By Wilf Watters

I last visited the Kinema in St Leonards (Hastings) four years ago and a report was published in the Bulletin Vol47 No5. It would be very useful if readers could go back to that report to get the background. However the story is that a group of people rescued an old cinema that had lost its original front and was then a builders' yard.

The auditorium had been in use as a builders' retail showroom and had suffered as a result of heavy piles of materials and dust. So it took the enterprising team months of hard work restoring the fabric of the walls and floor. This resulted in a somewhat square-shaped hall but with most of its original plasterwork intact. There is no actual stage as such but the floor in front of the screen is suitable for 'theatre-in-the-round' productions.



The paybox and bar area with an old projector on display

Well I was welcomed by the people who manage it and they have restored the auditorium with second-hand seats from a London cinema, fitted tabs and a nice wide screen and, of course, a digital projector (in a rather cramped space). They run programmes of films, live shows and musical events and a handy bar for refreshments. I was glad to see that they have mid-afternoon matinées for people like me who cannot attend the evening performances. I was shown around by Olga Mamonova the artistic director.

All photos by the author



Artistic Director Olga Mamonova in the front row



The proscenium, tabs and screen at the Kino

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

THE EMBASSY CINEMA, CHESHAM

By Alan Body

The Embassy Cinema in Chesham (Buckinghamshire) was built for and operated by the Shipman & King circuit. It opened on 11 January 1937 with Shirley Temple in *Poor Little Rich Girl*. There were 1,146 seats in stalls and circle levels. There was a café located in the circle foyer. It closed on 24 April 1982 with Peter Ustinov in *Evil under the Sun*.

Post closure of the Embassy an application was made for listing status to be granted – this was rejected. Below is some 1982 correspondence with Chesham Town Council, Bucks County Council and Chiltern District Council. The core of the building was demolished in June 1983 and shops and flats, which formed part of the building, were demolished in March 1984. Redevelopment started some months after. It would have celebrated its 80th birthday in January 2017.

I have put together a profile of the cinema from personal material. This will be featured at the Chesham Town Museum from 9 January 2017 for a 4/5 week period. The presentation will be partly in the Museum's window with further material inside. [15 Market Square, HP5 1HG; opening times Tuesday, Wednesday & Saturday, 11am-3pm, admission free.] This is a repeat of a similar presentation at the museum, which proved very popular when held in January / March 2016.

All images supplied by the author

Dear Mr. Body,

Protection by Listing of the Embassy Cinema, Germain Street, Chesham

Further to my letter of the 20th August about the above and our subsequent telephone discussions, I expect you are aware that the Historic Buildings Officer has written to the Chiltern District Council confirming his earlier view that the Embassy Cinema is not of Statutory Listing quality by current standards. Possibly you also know that the District Planning Officer subsequently asked the County Planning Officer to liaise with the Historic Buildings Inspector at the Department of the Environment in order to ascertain whether or not they agree to his views in this matter.

When that information is to hand, my Council's Planning and General Purposes Committee will again consider the question but I thought, in the interests of all concerned, I should let you know where the situation stands at present so far as my Council is concerned.

Letter from Chesham Town Council to the author, 11 October 1982

The Embassy Cinema, Germain Street, Chesham

I have been asked by Chiltern District Council Planning Department to request that you assess whether the Embassy Cinema in Chesham is of special architectural or historic interest, as it is threatened by redevelopment of its site. I enclose a location plan, photographs and enclosures.

The cinema was built in 1936 for the Shipman and King theatre circuits and is ascribed to David E. Nye.

If you consider the cinema to meet the criteria for interwar buildings, would you please arrange for it to be spot listed as a **matter of urgency**. Please contact me at the above telephone number if you require any further information.

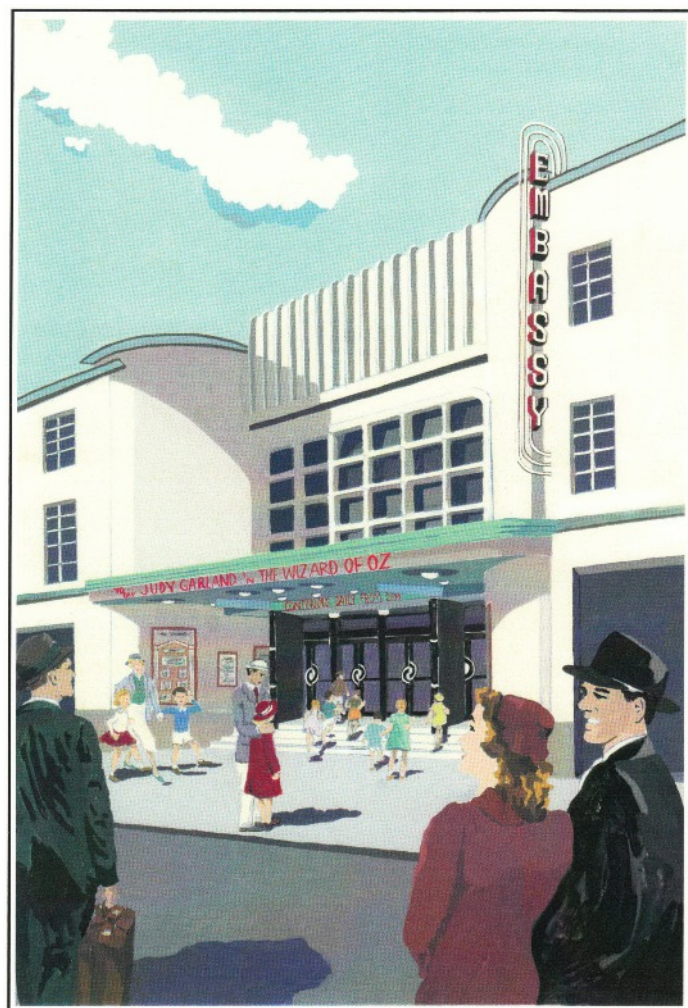
Letter from Buckinghamshire County Council to the Department of the Environment, 26 October 1982

The Embassy Cinema, Germain Street, Chesham.

I refer to your letters of 2nd August 1982, 7th September 1982 and enclosed paper, a copy of which was forwarded to the County Council's Historic Buildings Officer, together with my request for an opinion as to the special architectural or historic value of the Cinema building. Advice was also sought from the Historic Buildings Division of the Department of the Environment. In both cases, the opinion is that the building does not merit statutory listing by current standards in that it does not meet the criteria for buildings of the inter-war period.

A report was made to this Council's Buildings and Town Planning Committee on 20th January 1983 incorporating the above opinions and the decision was taken that no Building Preservation Notice should be made.

Letter from Chiltern District Council to the author, 28 January 1983



Matinée Magic – a gouache painting by Mary Casserley commissioned by the author; available as a card from the Museum or JPS Stationers Market Square, Chesham, HP5 1HG.
A companion piece to her work depicting the Rex Berkhamsted.

Embassy
CHESHAM
Phone: 3191

CONTINUOUS DAILY
from 4.45 p.m.

Matinees Monday, Thursday
and Saturday at 1.45 p.m.

Sundays 4.30 — 10 p.m.
Doors open 4 p.m.

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SEPTEMBER**

PRICES:
Stalls 4/- Circle 5/- 5/6

Cafe open to the General Public
Daily from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Large Free Car Park

★ A SHIPMAN & KING THEATRE

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12th 6 days

AUDREY HEPBURN :: PETER O'TOOLE

William Wyler's
How to Steal a Million
(Panavision and colour)

5.25 8.25 Mon., Thur. and Sat. 2.30

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th 6 days

STEVE McQUEEN :: KARL MALDEN
SUZANNE PLESSETTE :: BRIAN KEITH

NEVADA SMITH
Colour

5.20 8.35 Mon., Thur. and Sat. 2.15

JOHN STRATTON :: PAULINE MUNRO

STRANGLER'S WEB

7.20 Mon., Thur. and Sat. 4.10



CHESTER CINEMAS THAT DIDN'T OPEN

By David A Ellis

The early days of the moving image was the time when many far-seeing entrepreneurs jumped on to the new lucrative bandwagon, building and opening cinemas everywhere. The world of cinema was a form of escapism, focusing the mind on the screen images for a few hours. Chester had nine cinemas, not all running at the same time. Fairground owner Pat Collins, who was from Boughton in Chester, opened **Collins' Cinema Deluxe** in Brook Street in 1921 and was planning to open another cinema in the City, which didn't materialise. His first cinema show in Chester was at his funfair. The show was called **Wonderland** and it came to Chester in 1909. Collins exited the Brook Street cinema in 1926 and it became the **Majestic** under new ownership. The cinema closed in September 1956 and became the **Majestic Ballroom** in 1957, followed by bingo in 1965. It closed as a place of entertainment and the auditorium section was demolished for road widening.


COLLINS' CINEMA DE LUXE,
BROOK STREET, CHESTER.
8-40 ——— TWICE NIGHTLY ——— 8-40.
 MATINEES—MONDAY, WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY, 2-30.
 Mr. P Collins begs to announce that the above Picture Hall
 will be opened by
LADY ARTHUR GROSVENOR,
 on Monday, April 18th, 1921, at 6.40 p.m. All proceeds
 from First Night Performances to be given to the Y.M.C.A.
 Bishop's Palace Fund.
First Class Pictures. First Class Orchestra.
 ALL SEATS 'TIP UP.'
 Prices of Admission (Including Tax), 6d., 9d., 1/3.
 All seats may be booked at 56, Foregate Street (Tel 599). Box Office open
 daily, 10-12 and 2-4. Saturdays 10-1.

Another would-be cinema that didn't see the light of day was **The Scala**, advertised in 1921. Shares were on offer for this at five shillings (25p) each and the building was to be situated near the Eastgate Bridge. An article from 1921 says the site is an ideal one being recently occupied by the buildings of the **Hop Pole Hotel** and other business premises. The architect was going to be the famous **Alfred Ernest Shennan**, from Dale Street in Liverpool. He was also a director of the company, called **'Scala Super Cinema (Chester) Ltd'**. He had designed a number of cinemas and went on to design many 1930s super cinemas. The auditorium was to house 1,500, 400 of those in the balcony. An organ was going to be installed. A report says: "The organ will augment the musical endeavours of a full orchestra." For some reason the project failed to get off the ground.

In 1923 another cinema project had been given the green light. The building was to be situated on **Hoole Road** at the corner of **Lightfoot Street**. It was to house 864 patrons, 240 seats in the balcony. It would be brick with stone or terracotta facings. The cinema was to be 98ft long and 55ft wide. There were to be shops either side. A Mr **WF Youd** on behalf of a Mr **Charles Grandage** made application for the cinema. Again, another cinema that failed to come to fruition.



The never-opened cinema in Boughton, Chester in July 2007



SCALA SUPER-CINEMA (Chester)
LIMITED.
 INCORPORATED UNDER THE COMPANIES ACTS, 1900 to 1917.

CAPITAL - - - - **£45,000**
 Divided into **45,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each.**
 There are no Preference or Deferred Shares. All Shares rank equally.

Issue at par of 44,300 Ordinary Shares of £1 each
 Payable 5s. per Share on Application, 5s. per Share on Allotment, 5s. per
 Share three months from Allotment, and 5s. per Share six months
 from Allotment.

The Directors' qualification is £500.

DIRECTORS:
HENRY BROWNHILL WRIGHT, "Rodney Lea", Oakland Vale, New Brighton, Manager,
 Chairman of Cheshire Picture Halls, Ltd. (which owns the New Ferry Lyceum Picture
 House, The Birkenhead Empire, The Birkenhead Palladium, The Tranmere Coliseum,
 and the Moreton Picture Hall), Vivid Exclusives, Ltd., Chairman of Directors.
ALFRED ERNEST SHENNAN, C.C., 35, Dale Street, Liverpool, Architect and Surveyor,
 Managing Director of Picture House (Kendal), Ltd., Gidlow Picture House, Ltd., Pres-
 tatyn Palladium Ltd., Director of Cheshire Picture Halls Ltd., Managing Director.
 Captain **ARCHIE MCCORMICK**, 3, Tynwald Hill, Stonycroft, Liverpool, Surveyor, Direc-
 tor of Tunnel Road Picturedrome Ltd., Liverpool, Prestatyn Palladium Ltd.
GEORGE FREDERICK D. CAMPBELL, Oakland Vale, New Brighton, Engineer,
 Director of Cheshire Picture Halls Ltd., Vivid Exclusives Ltd.
JOHN HENRY MARMION, "Southfield," Waterloo Road, Waterloo, Liverpool, Stevedore.
WILLIAM MARTIN WATSON, 10, Carstairs Road, Fairfield, Liverpool, Iron and Tin
 Plate Merchant.
HENRY CHARLES HOUGHTON, "Claremont," Vicar's Cross, Chester, Optologist.

BANKERS:
LONDON JOINT CITY and MIDLAND BANK LIMITED, Dale Street, Liverpool.

SOLICITORS:
MASON, GRIERSON & MARTIN, 34, Castle Street, Liverpool.

AUDITOR:
E. NOEL HUMPHREYS, Chartered Accountant, 9, Old Bank Buildings,
 Eastgate, Chester.

ARCHITECT:
A. ERNEST SHENNAN, F.S.Arc., 35, Dale Street, Liverpool.

SECRETARY AND REGISTERED OFFICE:
R. DUNCAN FRENCH, Incorporated Accountant, 21 and 23, North John
 Street, Liverpool.

Finally, a cinema was built in Boughton. Cinema enthusiast **Roger Shone** tells me a licence was applied for before the building was finished so a licence was refused. Obtaining materials to finish it may have proved difficult after the refusal due to the outbreak of WWII. Another source says that the building was to open in September 1939 but was leased for the duration of the war as a store. The late **Brian Hornsey** in his booklet *Ninety Years of Cinema in Chester* says: "In January 1939 plans were placed before the Improvement Committee of the Council by a Mr **Moorcroft**, builder for the proposed erection of a cinema theatre. **AE Shennan** was to be the architect. A **Moore and Dutton** requested a licence and this was deferred. At a Watch Committee meeting on 27 April it was ruled that they had no power to grant a cinematograph licence for premises not in existence. That is all that is recorded.

It was built and looks like it was requisitioned on or just before the outbreak of war. **Roger Shone** recalls speaking to someone who went to the building for food coupons. "If anyone can enlighten me more on this, I would be happy to hear from him or her." The building on **Christleton Road**, which according to **Roger Shone** was going to be called **The Electric Palace**, has been a number of things over the years, including a **Blockbusters** video store and auctioneers.

Editor's Note: David A Ellis, Peter Davies and **Roger Shone** have written a book about the cinemas of the Chester area, which will be published by the CTA in the *Mercia Cinema Histories* series during 2017. Watch for announcements about this book, which will explore the history of the various cinemas in and around this historic City.

THE CINEMAS OF HALTWHISTLE

By Charles Morris

The Northumbrian town of Haltwhistle, which claims to be at the centre of Britain, will be known to travellers between Carlisle and Newcastle, either by rail or road; also to visitors to Hadrian's Wall, which runs close by. The town probably originated in Roman times and its church dates back to the thirteenth century. Coal mining in the 18th and 19th Centuries is, however, responsible for the town developing to its present size of approximately 4,000 people. The Gem, one of its two former cinemas, would have been seen by motorists as the A69, once the 1950s bypass had been created, went right past it; and any rail passenger who alighted at Haltwhistle station would have seen the cinema directly opposite in Boat Lane. The cinema trade's annual publication, the *Kinematograph Year Book*, nevertheless overlooked the Gem's existence until it had been operating for some twenty years. It ignored the town's other cinema, the *Westgate*, for its entire 25 year existence.

It was once claimed that the Gem was originally built to accommodate soldiers during the First World War and that it later became a music hall. However there is clear evidence that it was built as a cinema and that a licence was applied for and granted on behalf of its owner, Mr Dryden, in June 1911. Superintendent Appleby reported to the police court that the building in his opinion was a very suitable place for film exhibitions; it would scarcely burn as it was constructed of steel and brick and the cinematograph lamp [sic] was outside the building altogether.



The Gem/Cinema in the 1960s

The Gem was in fact a very basic structure. The frontage was of brick, cement rendered, with a central abutment containing the small stage. The auditorium was steel framed with a few courses of brick for the walls and the upper part, plus the roof, tongue-and-groove timber overlaid with corrugated steel sheet. A pair of wooden doors at the left hand side of the frontage served as the main entrance and a similar door on the right was an emergency exit. The front door led into a short passage of the same width, containing the paybox on the right. The passage continued into the auditorium at the screen end and almost immediately there was a straight wooden staircase leading to the front edge of the balcony. The stalls were raked, utilising the natural slope of the land and at the far right hand corner there was another staircase to the balcony, which contained the bulk of the 500 seats (once listed as 600), from which there was also an emergency exit to the higher ground at the back of the building. There was no ceiling, just the timber roof with exposed steel trusses. The office, boiler room and sweet store were beneath the stage. The first manager was believed to be Mr E Lawrence Rushton; Leo Martin and his understudy Bella Ashurst played the upright piano at the corner of the stage for the silent films. The Gem was later equipped with Filmophone sound. This was a very short-lived sound-on-disc system, which must, of necessity, have been replaced within a couple of years. Artefacts found in the cinema suggest that Western Electric sound was later fitted.

In 1947 the Gem was taken over by MBC cinemas, an organisation based in Workington with a circuit of about twenty cinemas spread across Cumberland, Westmorland, Northumberland and Durham with offshoots into Yorkshire (Whitby) and Selkirk in Scotland. Other than Workington and Carlisle and Penrith, the cinemas were nearly all in small towns, thus the Gem fitted into the portfolio quite well. MBC wasted no time in equipping the Gem with the latest Westar projectors



Two views of the interior of the Gem/Cinema in 1994, after closure

and Westrex sound system, as indeed they did with several of their cinemas at about the same time. For unknown reasons they re-named the Gem as simply The Cinema; perhaps to indicate that their opposition, the Westgate, was not worthy of being called such!

Perhaps, though unlikely, the new equipment did not bring forth consistently satisfactory results; or maybe the downstairs projection room resulted in the Haltwhistle audience being unusually inquisitive; or it may simply have been a case of people sticking their hands up in front of the projection beam; but MBC felt obliged to produce a special filmlet, which ran: "Anyone found entering the projection room with the intention of interfering with the projection equipment or the work of the operators will be prosecuted." When CinemaScope arrived, a new screen was duly fitted and the screen curtains, with their sunburst pattern in the middle, were widened by having pieces of cloth, of different colour to the original, stitched to each side.



The frontage and the projection room in 1994, after closure

The 1940s Gem experience is recalled as one of "somewhat faded upholstery, disturbing springs, wooden floor, misty smoke-ridden smells and the sound of heavy rain drumming on the tin roof." Nevertheless it was generally considered to be superior to the *Westgate*. This was named after the street in which it was located and functioned in the dance hall of the Mechanics Institute, whose trustees rented the building to Messrs Greaves and Stoddart from the end of 1935 for the

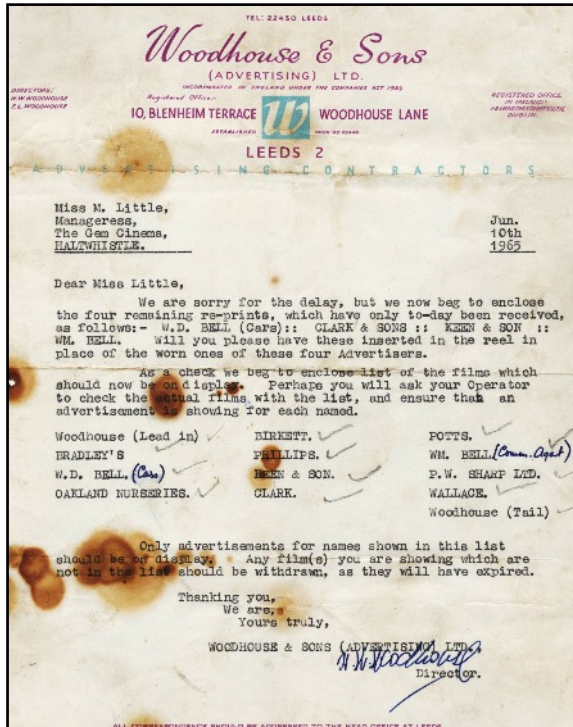
sum of £3/10s per week, once the difficulties of obtaining a cinematograph licence had been overcome. The seats were on one level on a flat floor, with a capacity only half that of the Gem. The projection box was the former reading room and, although we don't know what equipment was fitted, we are informed that the projection standards were less than sophisticated with reels running off, shown out of order and sometimes back to front! There was a projectionist named Benny who wore a scarf in all weathers. When a breakdown occurred, the audience would shout "Benny's got his scarf caught in the projector again!"

Both cinemas ran together for twenty five years, usually running continuous shows. On Saturday there were two houses and it was customary for people to congregate near the station, some having arrived from the nearby villages and towns and to set off in groups to either the Gem or the Westgate. Some would then see the first house at one cinema and then dash to the other for its second. Each having three changes of programme per week, the problem of finding enough films was overcome, in the Westgate's case, by showing a modern film at the weekend but older films, sometimes more than ten years old, in the earlier part of the week. At one stage the Gem had the pick of the Rank, MGM, Columbia, United Artists, Warner Bros, Disney and Republic films. This left the Westgate with Twentieth Century Fox and Paramount, which did at least lead to the Westgate being equipped with CinemaScope first. The Gem had the Gaumont newsreel, with bespoke titles saying "The Cinema presents Gaumont British News" (it being called The Cinema by then), while the Westgate had Pathé. Both were about ten days old. It was evident that The Cinema showed no trailers; not in later years anyway.

In December 1960 Jack Stoddart, managing director of George Stoddart Entertainments Ltd, announced the closure of the Westgate,



The Westgate cinema today



apparently to nobody's surprise. "No-one is coming to the cinema these days," he said. "This is not only happening in Haltwhistle. Cinemas have been closing in bigger places than Haltwhistle. The fact is that there is not enough business in Haltwhistle for two cinemas. We have been hanging on to see if things would pick up but now we can't keep it going any longer. The cinema will open for the

Sunday night performance, as advertised but after that it will be closed." (Sunday opening had only been allowed in Haltwhistle that year). The last film, on Sunday 11 December, was *The Man From Colorado*, starring Glenn Ford and William Holden, which had been released in Britain in 1948. The seats and equipment were to be shared between the company's remaining cinemas at Whickham and Rothbury (the latter being another cinema totally overlooked by the *Kinematograph Year Books*) and Annan. The building still stands and now houses the public library.

By 1968 The Cinema (former Gem) was reduced to showing films on Monday and Tuesday with a different programme for Thursday and Friday, with bingo on Saturday and Sunday. In June 1971 MBC Cinemas abruptly withdrew from the cinema business, whereupon some of the cinemas closed and others fairly quickly found new proprietors. The Cinema was one of the closures but the new owners, the Stanhope Cinema Circuit (actually a bingo firm) was persuaded via a petition to keep it open. It carried on by showing films for

three nights with bingo on others but films eventually finished at the end of February 1975. The admission prices by this time were 40p in the balcony (half price 25p), stalls 25p & 20p, pit 20p for all. It seems the seat booking facility once available for the balcony and stalls had ended some time previously. Cinemagoers were then faced with a 22 mile journey West to Carlisle or a 34 mile trek East to Newcastle upon Tyne. The Forum at Hexham, 14 miles away, had closed the previous year (though it was to reopen in 1982) and the once nearest cinemas, at Haydon Bridge (Town Hall) and Alston, had shut in about 1961.

PUBLIC NOTICES

THE CINEMA

HALTWHISTLE

WEEK COMMENCING 19th AUGUST, 1968

MONDAY, TUESDAY, Continuous from 5.45 p.m. —
ROSSANA PODESTA in
SEVEN GOLDEN MEN (U)
Also FIVE GOLDEN DRAGONS (A)
(In CinemaScope & Colour).

THURSDAY, FRIDAY, Continuous from 5.45 p.m. —
JOHN WAYNE, KIRK DOUGLAS, HOWARD KEEL in
THE WAR WAGGON (U)
(In CinemaScope & Colour).

SATURDAY —
BINGO & PRIZE BINGO, 8 p.m.

SUNDAY —
BINGO & PRIZE BINGO, 7 & 7.30 p.m.

JACKPOT £50 IN 54 NUMBERS. £50 ON 48 NUMBERS.

Press advert from 1968

The Cinema's redoubtable manageress, Mrs Moira Little, continued to run the bingo and the projectionist Dennis Bowerbank carried on in a different rôle. The projection equipment's amplifier also had a new rôle as part of the public address system. Certainly by this time the building had reverted to its original name of Gem. Later the front stairs to the balcony were removed and a false ceiling fitted from the edge of the balcony to the stage.

By 1994 all activity had ceased; vandals had been in and started a fire and the place was in a sorry state. The projectors, items of film and other memorabilia remained but were removed by myself soon afterwards. The building was demolished in 1995 and two semi-detached houses now stand on the site.

Almost twenty years later the Haltwhistle Film Project, an organisation that involved local children and teenagers in the making of short films, produced an engaging documentary in which memories of older inhabitants were combined with a re-enactment by the children and some adults of the life and times of the Gem. It is on YouTube and by entering [www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWldFHjOK_4] or if you simply enter Gem Haltwhistle you should find it.

All images supplied by the author

THE CINEMA
HALTWHISTLE.

WELCOME HOME FUND.

A GRAND

CONCERT

ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 1st

ARTHUR THOMPSON'S CONCERT PARTY

THE B.B.C. MALE QUARTETTE

Mrs. TEASDALE Mrs. BROOME
Soprano Contralto

Mr. T. KELLY Northern Baritone

Miss JOAN GALE Elocutionist

Mr. T. NANCARROW Mr. J. HUNTER
Accompanist

Accompanist: Mrs. BENNETT.

CHAIRMAN: REV. R. W. WATSON

Admission: Balcony (Booked Seats) 2/- 1st 1/- 2nd 1/-
Stalls 1/-

Doors open at 7.30 p.m. Concert to commence at 8 p.m. prompt.
TICKET HOLDERS ONLY ADMITTED UNTIL 1.00 a.m.

Profits will be donated to the following: T. Nelson & Co. 1/- 1000 of 1/- 1000

COME AND SUPPORT A WORTHY EFFORT.

WESTGATE CINEMA
HALTWHISTLE

Commencing Monday, Oct. 27th

MONDAY and TUESDAY FOR TWO DAYS
Priscilla Lane, Dennis Morgan, Thomas Mitchell
THREE CHEERS FOR THE IRISH
also "Angel from Texas"

WEDNESDAY and THURSDAY FOR TWO DAYS
Jeff Chandler in
ABANDONED
William Bendix in "Life with Riley"

FRIDAY and SATURDAY FOR TWO DAYS
Dana Andrews, Dorothy McGuire in
I WANT YOU

Mon., Wed., Fri. Continuous 5.45. Tues., Thurs. Once Nightly 7
Saturday - Matinee 5.00



The site of the Gem/Cinema in 1994 and today

Adverts for the Gem/Cinema and the Westgate

NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

By Derek Threadgall

I am a 78 year old new boy on the CTA block. I have worked in and around the film, television, public relations and advertising industries for some 60 years. I still have a nostalgic interest in cinemas and I admit to feeling very sad when I read in the CTA Bulletin about the fate of so many cinemas in the UK. Of course, times have changed. The traditional cinemas that I loved, visited and, in some cases, worked in, have now been replaced by soulless multiplexes devoid of any atmosphere comprising rabbit hutch 'screens'. I was introduced to the film world when taken by my grandmother to the 940-seat Regal cinema at the top of our road in Dovercourt, Essex; the film was *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. At five years old, I was hooked! At the time, most children dipped their toe into films by watching a Disney feature.



The former Regal Dovercourt in July 2007

It wasn't long before I followed the path of the beam of light filling the screen back towards its source behind a hole in the auditorium rear wall. The Regal was one of three cinemas in Dovercourt and Harwich; the other two were the Regent in Upper Dovercourt and the 308-seat Electric Palace in Harwich (built in 1911) and known as 'The Fleapit' to which we went as a last resort. The Regal has been replaced with a Co-op shop; the Regent is still there but no longer shows films; the Harwich Electric Palace is still there and still showing films (The incredible story of the Electric Palace was featured in *Picturehouse* No 37, 2012). I was proud to have been part of the successful fundraising team that rescued the cinema from oblivion after the 1953 East Coast floods.



The former Odeon Clacton as the Salon in summer 1980

In 1947, the family moved 16 miles to Clacton-on-Sea where I found three more cinemas, the 1,500-seat Odeon, the 1,750-seat Essoldo and the 675-seat Kinema Grand, Clacton's own version of the 'Harwich Palace' down-market cinema. I soon discovered that the Odeon ran the phenomenon that was the Saturday Morning Pictures, about which I lecture and write articles. The Essoldo introduced me to CinemaScope and 3D in the early 1950s and to MGM musicals, by which time, I was cinema-going six and seven times a week (it could be done with three cinemas showing split programming, Monday to Wednesday and Thursday to Saturday. The Essoldo also had a single Sunday showing). As my secondary school was in Colchester, I took advantage to sample Colchester's cinemas, two of which were the



The ABC Playhouse Colchester in summer 1980

320-seat Cameo which showed films such as *Down Among the Z Men* (1952) and the occasional racy continental film and the 663-seat Empire which was unique as it also showed an episode of an American serial (*Flash Gordon*) as part of the programme. School trips to the cinema were common; the ABC Playhouse cinema was our venue for *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) and the other 'right kind of films' we were allowed to see.

It seemed to me that I was spending most of my life in a series of second homes – cinemas. I was now beginning to take notice of the cinema décor, lighting and film presentation, which led me to the projection box. Here, I could see the practical application of film projection. Little did I know that in later years I would be a trainee projectionist in the original Telekinema from the 1951 *Festival of Britain*, which had been taken over by the British Film Institute and renamed the National Film Theatre, the only cinema in Britain at the time that was allowed to store nitrate film on the premises.

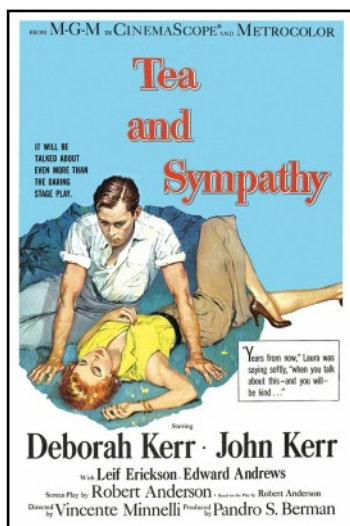
In the RAF, I discovered the camps' Astra cinemas and helped in the projection box of the Astra in my training camp in Hereford. Blotted my copybook on one occasion when in the box, I leaned against a wall and felt my arm slowly rising. I was putting the auditorium house lights up during the feature. Being an RAF camp, with a lively WAAF section, the lights illuminated the cinema's back rows occupied by couples in various stages of undress, followed by wolf whistles and promises of serious physical damage to the projectionists and to me. As a training camp, we were allowed into Hereford town once a week on Saturdays, so I took the opportunity of visiting two cinemas, the Odeon and the ABC Ritz, one in the afternoon and one in the evening.

During my time in the RAF, I joined the RAF film library as a projectionist based at RAF Hendon, then a recruitment section of Air Ministry. In this capacity I travelled the country with a mobile cinema mocked up as an aircraft fuselage as a member of the RAF's promotional and recruitment team. During our rest periods, I sought out more cinemas to visit. Although one of our shows was in Lewis' store in Manchester, I had digs in Huddersfield, the other side of the Pennines, as myself and two other projectionists were put up in the home of one of them for free, hence the hired car journey across the Pennines twice a day. When on a show, we generally took both our 16mm projectors with us, a Debie and a Bell and Howell; the latter was very handy for making toast (when our officer wasn't looking). This projector had a metal grille over the top of the 1,000 watt lamp housing on which we placed slices of bread when the machine was in operation and produced first class toast, albeit with black grooves from the grille; adding butter and jam produced a welcome snack.

The first cinema I visited was the 438 seat Ritz in Golcar, near Huddersfield. I decided to get a seat in the balcony and was directed by the usherette to a seat behind a pillar I assumed to be holding the roof up but it also blocked my view of the centre of the screen. There was no-one else in the balcony, so I asked to be moved to a better seat from where I could see the whole screen; the usherette made it clear that I should stay where I was (or else). So I watched *The Violent Playground* (1958) in a split-screen format.

When I was on an Agricultural Show with the RAF in Belfast, my second bizarre cinema experience occurred. I noticed an advertisement for the film *Tea and Sympathy* (1956), showing at a cinema in a Belfast suburb. The film was one I had wanted to see for a long time; so, I took a bus ride to the location and found the cinema, probably a rural 600 seater. Unfortunately, it was closed and locked up, so I started walking back to the bus stop. A little Irishman cycled past me in the direction of the cinema; something told me that he might have something to do with it. Sure enough, he parked his bike in an alley alongside the cinema and started to unlock the doors. I quickly turned around and walked back to the cinema, then entered the tiny foyer with the ticket office behind which sat the little man. "Would you loik to see the fillum, zoir?" "Well, yes, I would." "Very good, zoir. Here's your ticket and oi'll show you to your seat." which he proceeded to do with an usherette's torch, which seemed a trifle un-necessary as the house lights were up. I was the only patron and I assumed from the dearth of staff that he was the only staff member there. I hoped there were staff in the projection box but then, the way things were going so far, it wouldn't surprise me if he was the projectionist as well.

"Would you loike to see the fillum now, zoir?" "Well yes, if it's alright with you." "It is, zoir, it is." Off he went, the house lights dimmed and the CinemaScope film began. Perfect presentation. When it ended, he came down to me, still his only patron. "Would you loike to see the fillum again, zoir?" "I don't think so. I have to get back into town but that was excellent, thank you." "Always a pleasure, zoir." But, this surreal charade was not finished! Down the aisle came a lady carrying



a huge tray in front of her, full of ice creams, drinks and nuts; she walked to the end of the aisle, turned and then sauntered slowly back up stopping by my seat shaming me into buying something. I really needed to get back to reality very quickly. "I'm so sorry but no thank you I have to go." She stomped back up the aisle as I prepared to leave. Why, on earth was I apologising to an ice cream lady for wishing to leave the cinema and not buying an ice-cream? My friend, Spike Milligan, could have had a field day with this sketch! As I left the cinema, I walked a few yards and then something told me to turn around and watch. My new acquaintance came out of the cinema, locked up, mounted his bike and cycled past me. "Thank you, zoir and goodbye, zoir." "Have a good day!" was not around then. Whenever I see or hear reference to Deborah Kerr and John Kerr in *Tea and Sympathy*, a vision of Spike chuckling away, reminds me of that unreal afternoon in Belfast.

After my spell in the RAF, I spent a few months with Rank Film Distributors in Wardour Street, as a contracts clerk, notable for one bizarre experience. Whenever we sent a print to a cinema in Ireland, the chances were that we would never see it again. Rank's salesman for Ireland explained that after its official booking in an Irish cinema, the print would be circulated to any number of other Irish cinemas, surreptitiously overnight by donkey or by car and eventually be returned after it had disintegrated. Also, depending on which side of his bed he fell out of in the morning, RFD's managing director allegedly would view films to be considered for distribution. Producers of those films hoped that he was in a good mood and would smile favourably on their productions; if he was in a bad mood, he would agree distribution, take possession of the films and stick them on a shelf near his office from where they never strayed; rather unchivalrously. It was said that he did that so that no other distributor could have them. Happy days!

From Rank I went to Shepperton Studios as PA to the assistant studio manager from 1960 to 65 and in the early 1970s ran the successful public campaign to save the studio from demolition and housing development by the then City asset strippers, Jim Slater and John Bentley. But that is another story that I am happy to discuss with anyone who is interested and enjoys being bored.

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SPOTLIGHT ON WIGHT CINEMAS

By Gavin McGrath

Moving pictures are believed to have been shown as early as 1897 at the **Medina Hall** in Newport. The hall, which dated from 1889, was showing films regularly by 1910 when Salter's Champion Pictures were advertising their attraction. The hall was demolished in 1935 to build the Medina Cinema. Other early cinemas in Newport were the **Rink Picture Palace** in Hearn Street, a conversion of a skating rink, active between 1911 and 1927 and the **Grand** in Lugley Street, built around 1925. It also presented plays, remaining in business until 1962 and, although used as John Blundell's furniture warehouse for many years, was recently demolished and replaced by a Travelodge.

Cowes had the **Empire Theatre** on St Mary's Road, a conversion of a chapel in 1909, which lasted until 1921 and was recently used by a rigging company. The **Victoria Hall** on Medina Road was home to Poole's Perfect Pictures in the early 1910s, managed by Percy Milson, as was the **Cinema Hall** in Regent Street, Shanklin. It appears that the Victoria was still showing films up until the advent of talkies. Freshwater had two early ventures, the **Palace** from about 1908 to 1928 and the **Gaiety**, active from 1916 to 1935. The **Gaiety** was replaced by the **Regent**, which I will discuss later. Ryde had the **Theatre Royal**, built in 1871, which may have been screening animated pictures from 1903 but certainly with regularity from 1911. It later concentrated on stage productions, particularly pantomimes but settled back into film after the war. It was closed as a result of a fire in May 1961. The **Bijou** in the High Street opened in November 1910 in a former Temperance Hall but that only lasted until 1928. It was a back-to-front cinema with the screen at the street end of the building. Sandown had Granville's Bioscope screening films at the **Kursaal Kinema** and in the **Town Hall**, in the early 1910s. Another early cinema was the **Pavilion** on Fairy Road, Seaview, which was listed in the Kine Year Book of 1915. The property stills stands today and is a Masonic Lodge. Ventnor saw Walturdaw Pictures screening films at the **Grand Pavilion** on the Esplanade at least twice a week, along with the **Electric Palace** in Lower High Street from 1911 to the early 1930s.



The 1920s brought another handful of more elaborate cinemas, beginning with the **Playhouse** (above) on Palmerston Road, Shanklin, which opened in 1920. It was operating during the summer months only in the 1950s and went over to bingo in the early 1960s. That closed in 1995 and the building was demolished in 2010. In Cowes, the **Royalty** on Birmingham Road opened in 1921. It was the first purpose-built cinema on the Island and seated 700 patrons in stalls and balcony. This ran until August 1961 and was later a Lipton's supermarket and a sports and social club but was demolished in 2000.

The **Rivoli** (top next column) in Sandown was a conversion of the **Oddfellows Hall** of 1887 and opened on Station Avenue in March 1921 with stalls and a balcony. It was run by the Porter family for 40 years and was sold in 1961. It ended up on bingo from 1965 until 1993 and became a costume warehouse. At closure it was the only independently-run cinema on the Island. A plan to reopen the cinema by Bruce Webb, director of the Isle of Wight Film Festival, was launched in 2013 but foundered when the campaign failed to secure the necessary finance for the work. A proposal by the owner to demolish the building and build flats was submitted to the Council and approved in December 2015. Also in 1921, the **Scala** in Ryde opened



in December and was operated by Arthur Hill, the man behind Isle of Wight Theatres Group. It was taken over by Star in the late 1960s, as were most of the Island's cinemas and renamed the **Plaza**. It closed in June 1973 and was demolished two years later. Tom Brading, a local builder, opened the **Gaiety** in Grove Road, Ventnor in July 1924. It had a balcony and a sliding roof. It closed during the war but was hastily reopened after the **Rex** took a hit but closed again when its neighbour reopened in 1946. It was rebuilt as a lodge by the Freemasons.



The **Queen's** (above) in Albert Road, Sandown, opened in December 1928. This was another of Arthur Hill's houses but sold to the Isle of Wight Theatres and later Star, when it opened during the summer months only. The Cannon group acquired the Star circuit in August 1985 and, although the cinema was renamed, it closed the following month. A rather quaint small-town cinema, it was demolished in 1989 and replaced with a block of flats.



The 1930s was the age of the super cinema and the Island too pushed the boat out. The first in that decade was the **Regal** (above) in High Street, Shanklin, opened in August 1932 with an 890-seat auditorium with stalls and circle. It emerged as a **Cannon** following the Star takeover and closed in October 1986. It was later demolished

and replaced with flats and business premises. The King's in Castle Street, East Cowes, was one of two to open in 1935 and was run by Isle of Wight Theatres but this one was less fortunate than others on the Island, lasting until the mid-1950s only. It was acquired by Saunders Roe for an extension of their factory but was demolished and replaced by a Waitrose supermarket by 2010. The other opening of 1935 was the Regent in Freshwater, built and owned by Isle of Wight Theatres. The 514-seater was probably an appropriate size for the local community and lasted until 1962.



The year 1936 had no less than three openings, beginning with the Medina (above left) in High Street, Newport in April that year. It was 1,000-seater with stalls and circle and had a fully-equipped stage and restaurant. It was run by Isle of Wight Theatres from 1962 and was split in 1966 for bingo in the stalls with the cinema in the circle. It was renamed Studio 1 when taken over by Star in 1969 and Cannon when the Cannon group took over the circuit in 1985. Bingo ceased in 1987. It was taken over by Picturedrome and reopened in June 1994 with two screens and renamed Picturedrome. It closed in February 2000 in expectation of the new Cineworld opening later that year. It has been a Yates pub since 2003.

The second one to open in 1936 was the 1,500-seat Commodore (above right) in Star Street, Ryde during August. It was built by Ryde Cinemas on the site of a brewery and had a ballroom and café. The large stage meant it was suitable for live shows and Tommy Steele and Lonnie Donegan were among the performers here in 1957. The cinema was also acquired by Isle of Wight Theatres and then Star in 1969. It was, like the Medina, split for bingo in the stalls with two screens in the circle and another in the ballroom. It reopened after the tripling in June 1973. Cannon closed the cinema in December 1987, with the exception of the bingo but it was reopened in December 1997 under the control of Peter Walker and renamed Picturedrome. Today the Commodore has reverted to its original name and is run by Leo Leisure, which also manages the bingo operation.

The final opening of the year would be regarded by many as the best and was the Odeon, which opened in October. Designed by Andrew Mather it had 742 seats in the stalls and 486 in the balcony. It was renamed the Savoy in January 1961 when taken over by Isle of Wight Theatres. It lasted until December 1982 and was demolished in October 1984 and replaced with a block of flats with retail underneath.



The final cinema to open before the war was the Rex (above) in Church Street, Ventnor, which opened in 1938. It was designed by RI Hunt for Isle of Wight Theatres and built on the side of a cliff. Although damaged in World War II in 1941 it was reopened after repairs in 1946. It too was taken over by the Star circuit and operated in the summer season only, closing in September 1980. It was bought by

Keith Terry for £9,000 in May 1981 for his 'Vectorama' audio-visual attraction that opened in August 1982 but he went bankrupt soon after. Jack Sears bought the building in 1984 and it was then home to an amusement arcade. The auditorium was destroyed by fire in 1993, the canopy was hit by a bus in 1999 and the same year habitation by lizards halted demolition. It eventually bit the dust two years later.



It would be fifty-odd years before the first post-war cinema opened, in October 1989. Despite the boom in video rentals Vic Farrow opened the Screen de Luxe (above) on Sandown Road in Lake, a small village between Sandown and Shanklin. It was situated in a converted shop and seated around 150 people. It closed in September 2000, just a month after the opening of the new Cineworld multiplex and is now a veterinary clinic called Pet Doctors. The Ryde Theatre, which was situated in the former Town Hall and Market House of 1830, began a theatre and cinema venture after refurbishment in 1992 but films only lasted eight weeks, finishing in January 1993. The last and final cinema to open on the Island was the eleven-screen Cineworld (top next page) at Coppins Bridge, Newport. It opened its doors in August 2000 with a total capacity of around 1,800 and ensures that the public find something worth seeing amongst its large selection of films.

Other venues on the Island that have screened films include the Village Hall in Bembridge, which hosted a fundraising presentation of *The Young Ones* in December 2013 with Melvyn Hayes in attendance. The hall is also used by the Ramshackle Pop-Up Cinema, which also screens films at other venues across the Island. The Memorial Hall in Freshwater is used by the Freshwater Film Club, which recently screened the 1902 film *A Trip to the Moon* and the Village Hall in Gurnard is used by the Gurnard Film Society, which recently had *Cinema Paradiso*, *Bicycle Thieves* and *The Philadelphia Story*, bringing the punters in. The Apollo Theatre in Newport has classics such as *Casablanca* and *Gone with the Wind* under its belt, while the Medina Theatre, also in Newport, hosted regular film nights between 1991 and 2013 up to three times a week. Following the opening of Cineworld it was reported that no one turned up to see *Scary Movie* and films were suspended in November 2000 but relaunched again the following February with *Top Hat*. The plug was pulled in 2013 by the Isle of Wight Council, who own and run the building, claiming that the £28,000 bill for new projection equipment couldn't be justified. The last screening, *Le Weekend*, was due to be shown that December. The Quay Arts Centre, again in Newport, hosts free Saturday matinées on a weekly basis. An old church becomes the Sacred Cinema in August each year when the Isle of Wight Film Festival comes to Ventnor. The building's full-time use is as a youth and community centre. Also in the town, the Ventnor Arts Club has screenings up to six times a month.

The last few years has seen open-air cinema take off across the country and the Isle of Wight has been no exception. Screenings in summer 2016, courtesy of the Extraordinary Travelling Film Show, have included *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* at Carisbrooke Castle, *Spectre* at East Dene, *The Lost Boys* at Garlic Farm, *The Jungle Book* at the Isle of Wight Zoo and *Mamma Mia* at Ventnor Botanic Gardens. Cinema under the Stars, organised by Isle of Wight Radio, screened *Les Misérables* and *Pulp Fiction* (among others) at Robin Hill Country Park and *The Lady in the Van* was shown at Brading Roman Villa. Back in 2015 the Luna Cinema had *Back to the Future* and *Grease* showing at Osborne House and there was also the world's first sail-in cinema during Cowes Week when *Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World* was shown on the Esplanade in August 2011.

Photos courtesy of Cinema Theatre Association: Tony Moss Collection (Playhouse, Queen's and Regal) and Martyn Davies (Rivoli), David Simpson (Picturedrome, Screen de Luxe and Rex), Len Gazzard (Commodore and Cineworld) all used in accordance with the Creative Commons Licence, see creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/



The eleven-screen Cineworld at Newport, Isle of Wight

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 20 January *Song for Marion* (2013) [PG]
 Friday 27 January *Hope Springs* (2012) [12A]
 Saturday 4 February *Organ Coffee Morning* 10am admission free
 Tuesday 14 February Valentine's Day Special: *Sabrina* (1954) [U]
 Friday 17 February *Sing-Along-A-Grease* (1978) [A] 7:30pm only
 Films at 11:00am and 7:30pm unless otherwise stated.
 Behind the Scenes tours at 11am on Mondays 30 January,
 27 February & 27 March; £6 – book or simply turn up.

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

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].

28 January *Florence Foster Jenkins* (2016) [PG]
 25 February *The Graduate* (1967) [12A]
 25 March *High Noon* (1952) [U]

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

RENOWN'S THIRD FESTIVAL OF FILM

Sunday 12 February Watersmeet Theatre, High Street, Rickmansworth WD3 1EH; 09:30 to 18:00. Tickets £10.00.

Organised by the people behind the TV Channel *Talking Pictures*, introduced by Brian Murphy and featuring guest appearances from several stars and the showing of rare films. Lots of stalls with films, posters, books, movie memorabilia, etc and the CTA Sales Stall will be present. Details: [www.renownfilms.co.uk]

16MM FILM SHOW

Jack Hawkins, Phyllis Calvert and Mandy Miller star in *Mandy* 1952 Ealing Studios drama, plus full supporting programme.

Friday 20 January 2017 at 7:30pm at Burnt Ash Methodist Church (Back Hall), Burnt Ash Hill, Lee, London, SE12 0QD Admission £5.00 by programme available on the day.

Further details from Martin Cleave 020 8658 3319.

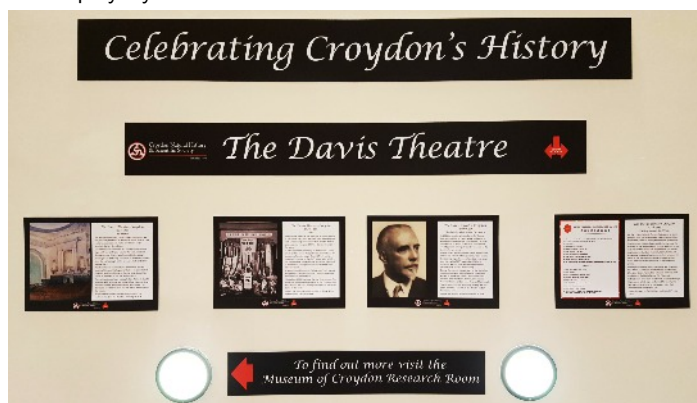
CROYDON CELEBRATES THE DAVIS' THEATRE

By Richard Norman

The spectacular Davis' Theatre was a major landmark in Croydon; it was also the largest cinema-theatre in England when it opened in 1928. It survived for only 30 years and was the focal centre of entertainment prior to the opening of the Fairfield Halls and was closed and demolished in 1959.

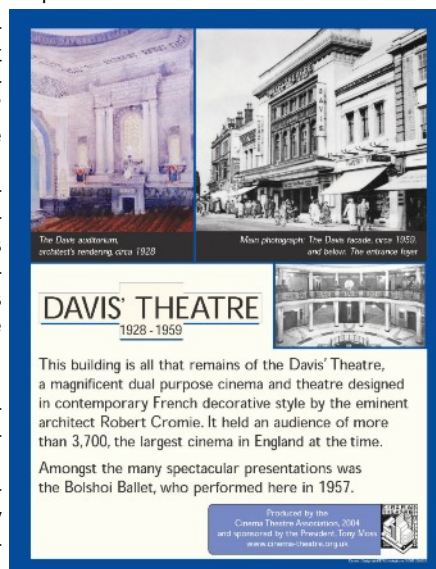
Three events during November 2016 brought the Davis' Theatre back to the attention of locals once again.

The first is an exhibition display 'Celebrating Croydon's History'. Using a series of information and pictorial panels it depicts the history of the famous theatre and is mounted in the entrance lobby at Croydon (Clocktower) Museum and Library. This was organised by the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society (CNHSS), in consultation with the CTA's Richard Norman. The display is particularly visible to people visiting either Croydon's Museum Research Room or the David Lean Cinema and it is likely to run for several months. Below is a photo of the display layout.



Connected with the above, was the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Bolshoi Ballet performing at the Davis (and Covent Garden) in 1956. At the time, this was a breakthrough in international relations for the Russian ballet company's first visit the West. Great interest was shown in their different style of ballet performance. *The Bolshoi Ballet* was filmed in Technicolor by Rank at both locations; the director was Paul Czinner and showcased the Bolshoi's artistry, especially of ballerina Galina Ulanova (inset photo), considered the greatest Giselle of her time. The special film was for general release (1957) and a special screening was shown at the Davis. To mark the anniversary of the Bolshoi's visit, the film once again had a special showing to the public, appropriately at the David Lean Cinema. The film was preceded with an illustrated talk by Carole Roberts of the CNHSS, about the theatre and the background to the Ballet performance.

Finally, eagle-eyed members may have noted that the CTA's commemorative plaque to the Davis' Theatre located on the High Street site had 'gone missing'! It was removed to allow refurbishment of the shop's frontage to which it is attached. The plaque was sponsored by the late Tony Moss and unveiled in 2005. It was replaced in November and is conveniently located adjacent to a busy bus stop, where waiting passengers have an opportunity to pass the time by inspecting the plaque!



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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)

ACCRINGTON (Lancs)

Plans have been submitted to turn the former Ritz into shops and apartments. It opened in January 1922 and closed in August 1958. It was converted into a furniture store, which closed in 2005. The vacant building was damaged by fire in 2011; see p17 Bulletin 48/3. {44964}

Lancashire Telegraph – 28 November; sent in by Philip Crompton

ASHFORD (Kent)

Plans to extend the Cineworld at Eureka Park have been approved.

Kent News – 26 October

BANGOR (Gwynedd)

The new Pontio centre has been open a year. Up to 31 October, over 30,000 tickets were sold for the 450-seat theatre and 120-seat studio and a further 33,130 tickets for the 200-seat cinema. {52011}

Daily Post (Wales) – 14 November

Brexit has been blamed for delays to a new development at Bryn Cegin, which could possibly include a multiplex cinema.

North Wales Chronicle – 24 November

BASILDON (Essex)

Plans to bring a cinema to the Eastgate Shopping Centre have been abandoned as the developers were unable to find an operator. The Council is still hoping that a town centre cinema will be provided in due course.

Basildon Echo – 21 October

BEESTON (Notts)

Plans for a multiplex have been shelved as major operators wanted exclusive parking for 400 cars, which was unacceptable to the Council. Instead they are looking at smaller “niche” operators to provide a seven to eight screen cinema. It is hoped construction would start in October 2018 with completion expected for December 2019.

Nottingham Post – 21 November

BELFAST

White's Tavern has obtained a cinema licence and will show films every Sunday. The dine-in cinema offers a meal and movie for £9.95.

News Letter (Northern Ireland) – 9 November



The ten-screen Movie House on Dublin Road could be demolished for an office block. The developers may look at putting some sort of cinema into the new building. The scheme is due to go out for public consultation in January. {26684}

Belfast Telegraph – 13 December; photo taken September 2014

BELPER (Derbys)

The Ritz has celebrated its 10th anniversary. It reopened on 3 November 2006 with 100 luxury seats in the former circle area. The building was originally a Town Hall and Law Court but was converted into a full-time cinema around 1939. In 1971 it was split with two cinemas upstairs and bingo downstairs; the cinemas closed in October 1991. {19827}

Belper News – 9 November

BIRMINGHAM (Digbeth)

The Mockingbird Bar at the Custard Factory opened a 100-seat cinema in November. It has had occasional screenings for about a year but now offers four screenings a day, seven days a week, showing latest releases.

Solihull News – 4 November

BLACKWOOD (Ceredigion)

The Maxime was due to hold a special show of *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* for homeless people on 9 January. {28064}

Wales Online – 5 December

BLAENAVON/BLAENAFON (Torfaen)



Further to the information provided on page 19 of the September/October 2016 issue of the Bulletin, I can confirm that the original auditorium on the first floor of the Workmen's Hall is still intact with the original proscenium and impressive curved balcony frontage. The stalls floor has been levelled with the addition of removable seats allowing multiple use of the auditorium, which originally had 927 seats according to the *Kine Year Book* 1955.

Sent in by John Skinner (photo)

BLYTH (Northumberland)



The former Wallaw cinema, now a Wetherspoon pub [above] appropriately called The Wallaw, was the venue for a charity Halloween fundraiser – a ticket-only paranormal special investigation didn't discover an unhappy spirit (no pun intended) of a lady that is meant to haunt the former projection box but it did raise £125 for ClicSargent. The grade II listed four-storey building originally opened in November 1937. It was subdivided in 1987 and showed its final film in 2004. The building then stood empty for nine years until it reopened as a Wetherspoon. {1826}

Wetherspoon News – winter 2016/17; sent in by Mike Whitcombe

BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)

Plans have been submitted for a project incorporating a new 1,100-seat theatre. It would replace the existing 350-seat Alexandra Theatre. A previous scheme was rejected in early 2016 because of the lack of affordable housing.

The Stage – 13 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

BORTH (Ceredigion)

The transformation of a former Welsh chapel into a boutique cinema, theatre and restaurant will be completed in time for the building's 140th anniversary in spring. It will be called *Libanus 1877*.

Wales Online – 11 November

BOURNEMOUTH

Plans (reported on p19 of the last Bulletin) to declare the Odeon as an Asset of Community Value [ACV] have been rejected. Odeon placed a covenant on the building when it was sold, preventing its future use as a cinema. It is due to be demolished, except for the façade. Plans have been submitted for shops and 84 flats. The local newspaper website has a gallery of 17 photos of features that have not been seen for years at [tinyurl.com/zyh92qu]. {20081}

Daily Echo (Bournemouth) – 28, 30 November, 2, 5, 14, 17 December; sent in by John Forster & Philip Stevens

The ABC was due to close on 4 January. Patrons were asked to choose the last film; the choices were *The Wizard of Oz*, *Some Like it Hot*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Top Gun*, *Back to the Future*, *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Notting Hill* and *Mamma Mia* – the vote went to *Back to the Future* (1985). All seats were £5 with proceeds going to the Dorset Mind charity. The tabs and screen warmers were used for the last time. This will mean the end of the ABC name. See back page. {24207}

Odeon has released details of their new ten-screen cinema at the Bh2 complex, which will replace these two. One auditorium will include a curved iSense screen with a wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling picture from a 4k digital projector. Each screen will have reclining seats and two will be all-recliner. Food can be taken into the auditoria. The kids' screen will have a 'fun and comfortable' seating area at the front for small children. It is thought the opening date will be 10 February; the Regent/Odeon is likely to close the previous day.

Daily Echo (Bournemouth) – 15, 23 December; sent in by David Alexander, Robert Bradshaw, Adrian & David Cox, Richard Jones, Allan Pointon, Philip Stevens & Martin Tapsell

BRIGHTON

As reported on p19 of the last Bulletin, Councillors dropped their objections to amended plans to demolish the former Astoria and build flats. Work could have started by the time you read this and is expected to take six months to complete. Local residents criticised the Council for not keeping them informed and have raised concerns about noise. See Casework p5.

The Argus (Brighton) – 14 December

The grade II* listed Hippodrome has been placed on the Buildings at Risk register by Historic England. The group striving to save the theatre has been unsuccessful in a £3.6m bid for government funding.

The Argus (Brighton) – 21 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

The Duke of York's held a free showing of *The Muppet Christmas Carol* on 2 December for disabled people.

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

Some news on what was once the site of the Regent cinema on the corner of North Street and Queens Road at Brighton's Clock Tower. Well-known as one of the first super cinemas, the Regent opened in 1921; the main alterations after that were following a fire in 1929, to the balcony in 1955 for CinemaScope and a new proscenium in 1962 for 70mm roadshows. Over the years the cinema passed from PCT via Gaumont to Rank. It closed in 1973, along with Rank's West Street Academy and Odeon, on the opening of the new three-screen Odeon Kingswest. The cinema was demolished soon after with Boots being the main retail outlet in the new building. John Lewis has announced they have now acquired the freehold to the block and will shortly start discussions on a planned department store. It seems this will once again involve levelling the site.

Sent in by Jeremy Perkins

Richard Gray writes: The Regent is one of the greatest cinema losses as it was a leader in the planning and scale of cinemas here in the wake of the WWI, as Robert Atkinson, its architect, had looked at the latest in cinema design while on a fact-finding visit to the USA (on architectural education for the Architectural Association) during 1919-20; it introduced the fan-shaped auditorium, brilliantly shoe-horned into the cramped and hilly site. The CTA put a plaque on the site in May 2001 – see front page Bulletin 35/4 and current *Picture House*. The Casework Committee is aware of this development and will actively seek reinstatement of the plaque on any new building.

BRYNMAWR (Blaenau Gwent)



The Market Hall Cinema was forced to close in early December as asbestos was discovered during preparatory work to build a second screen. The new 130-seat auditorium will be in the adjacent former library, which was originally the cinema's front stalls. The current Screen ① occupies the former balcony area with 208 seats on a very pronounced rake with ample legroom between the rows. Before subdivision the cinema had 754 seats, a thirty foot deep stage and three dressing rooms. The Market Hall Cinema claims to be the longest continually running cinema in Wales and to have started showing moving pictures as far back as 1911. The building it occupies was originally built in 1894 as a Market Hall as its name suggests and the front rows seats had to be removed to facilitate the running of a market on Saturdays after the building was converted into a cinema. The distinctive frontage was added in the 1930s. The volunteer-run venue was awarded *Cinema of the Year* in 2014.

Late News: The cinema hoped to reopen before Christmas. {26576}

Gwent Gazette – 8 December; Wales Online – 20 December; sent in by, additional information & photo from John Skinner

BURNLEY (Lancs)

A viability study has confirmed there is a way forward for the vacant Empire Theatre – see p19 last Bulletin. The campaign group fighting to save the building can now commission the second phase, looking at details and finances. {36755}.

Lancashire Telegraph – 21 November; sent in by Phillip Crompton; The Stage – 1 December; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

CHELMSFORD (Essex)

The new Everyman opened on 16 December. There are five screens, with seating capacities of 114, 74, 82, 58 and 60. Screen ④ has a small stage and there is also a 29-seat auditorium available for private hire. It is only five minutes away from the current eight-screen Odeon. {54771}

Chelmsford Weekly News – 24 November; sent in by David Simpson

CIRENCESTER (Glos)

According to the local press, Everyman has pulled out of the proposed four-screen cinema in Brewery Court. The development has been subject to several delays. We wonder if the scheme will be picked up by another operator? Cirencester has been without a cinema since the now-demolished Regal closed in 2003.

Wilts & Glos Standard – 3 November; sent in by Chris Snowden

COLCHESTER (Essex)

An 'expert' report states that plans for a twelve-screen 3,083-seat Cineworld at the Northern Gateway site off the A12 would have no significant impact on the Town Centre. The report flies in the face of a Council decision not to allow an out-of-town cinema at Tollgate Village in Stanway. A legal challenge to the Northern Gateway scheme has now been mounted by the Tollgate developer.

Daily Gazette – 25 October, 17 November, 2 December

DUDLEY

The keys of the Hippodrome have been handed over to the group campaigning to save it. Work can now begin to transform the venue back into a theatre; it has been empty since bingo moved out in 2009. However, the group still needs to raise about £5m. {41631}

Express & Star – 5, 20 December; sent in by Ivan Harris

DUMFRIES

A cinema is included in plans for the redevelopment of the Southerngate Centre. No time scale or operator have been mentioned.

Dumfries Courier – 23 September

EDINBURGH (Central)

Work has started on the St James development, which will include an “ultra-luxury” cinema to be operated by Everyman. The centre is due to open in 2020.

Edinburgh Evening News – 18 October, 19 November

EDINBURGH (Leith)

Historic Environment Scotland wants to ‘A’ list a 1960s block of flats. A local resident is urging them to have another look at the former State cinema, currently listed category B. Films ceased in May 1972 followed by bingo and a nightclub. The latter has now closed although a snooker club continues to operate in the building. {23261}

Edinburgh Evening News – 17 November

EDINBURGH (Portobello)

An application to demolish the C(s)-listed former George and build flats has been rejected by the planning committee. This stay of execution has revived hopes that the door may still be open to preserve the building. See p15 Bulletin 50/4. {23292}

Edinburgh Evening News – 20 October

FLINT

The grade II listed Plaza reopened on 9 December. Initially there will be only one screen with about 100 seats in the front stalls but two more in the circle are proposed if funds can be raised through ticket sales; it is hoped these could be open by Easter. It will launch by showing ‘catch-up’ films. The newspaper website has photos and a video at [tinyurl.com/j9eozb8]. See p20 Bulletin 50/5. {22948}

Daily Post (Wales), Flintshire Chronicle – 27 October, 16 December;
Liverpool Echo – 30 October

FORFAR (Angus)



A planning application has been lodged for conversion of the former ticket office at the Pavilion to a house. It is believed the auditorium has been demolished but the detached ticket office remains. Does anyone know for certain? {47617}

Forfar Dispatch – 1 December; photo taken September 2006

HALIFAX (West Yorks)

Campaigners against benefit cuts in Halifax demonstrated in support of a showing of Ken Loach’s outstanding film *I, Daniel Blake* at the local Vue. The demonstration was one of dozens taking place nationwide at showings of the film. Campaigner Barnaby Neale explained: “This film is a masterpiece, a sadly accurate tale of how the Conservative government’s savage and inhuman approach to welfare harms the people who need it most.”

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe

HALSTEAD (Essex)

Movies are to recommence at the Empire. The cinema operation last ceased in July 2005, mainly due to the opening of a multiplex in nearby Braintree. Volunteers are now within sight of their target of £60,000 to buy a projector. The 272 seats have been cleaned and half the new carpet has been laid. It is hoped to launch in December and to start regular screenings in January. {14560}

Halstead Gazette – 11 November

HAVERFORDWEST (Pembroke)

Two rival plans for a five-screen cinema have been unveiled. One is on the site of the former Wilko store at Old Bridge and the other at Slade Lane. Both developers have held public exhibitions of their plans. The developer of the former is said to be in negotiations with two cinema operators and has applied for planning permission. The existing two-screen Palace in the grade II listed Corn Exchange would be badly affected by the plans.

Pembrokeshire Herald – 14, 21 October, 4, 11 November;
Western Telegraph (Pembroke) – 19 October, 2, 9, 16, 30 November

HORSHAM (West Sussex)

Plans have been approved for a six-screen 850-seat cinema as part of the regeneration of Piries Place. Work could start in April or May.

West Sussex County Times – 27 October, 1, 14 December

HUDDERSFIELD (West Yorks)

The extension of the Kingsgate shopping centre has been recommended for approved by planners. The scheme includes a multiplex cinema; no operator has been mentioned.

Yorkshire Post – 1 December

IPSWICH (Suffolk)

Further to the Newsreel item on p21 of the last issue, according to a message from Empire on social media the opening of their new twelve-screen cinema at the Buttermarket Centre has been postponed from pre-Christmas to February.

Ipswich Star – 17, 18 November; sent in by David Simpson

KESWICK (Cumbria)



After 25 years of running the Alhambra, Tom Rennie has bought the cinema. Tom’s five-year lease on the building was due to end in March and Graves (Cumberland) Ltd offered him the chance to buy it. Tom’s daughter and husband will eventually take over the running of the cinema, which first opened in 1913. {3150}

News & Star (Cumbria) – 13 December; sent in by Ian Payne; photo taken July 2010

LEEK (Staffs)

Plans to bring a Cinebowl to the town, similar to the one in nearby Uttoxeter, have been scrapped. The Council failed to find a suitable site and developer.

The Sentinel – 13 December; sent in by Allan Poynton

LIVERPOOL (Central)

Two firms are interested in running the new 1,500-seat music venue inside the former Forum/ABC – see p22 last Bulletin. Provisional plans have been approved by the Council and now a detailed planning application can be submitted. Two previous developers were refused permission to smash a hole in a curved wall! The newspaper website has some photos and a video at [tinyurl.com/h75ua3v] and at [tinyurl.com/hl88ddn]. {6521}

Liverpool Echo – 12, 13 December; sent in by Mike Taylor

LLANELLI (Carmarthen)

The former Theatr Elli (ex Odeon) opened its doors to the public on 18 November so they could see how work is progressing on conversion to a luxury cinema with a café and live music venue. Many original features have been restored to their original condition. The building has been given a new name – Calon. The plans include installing a cinema organ, the Christie that was originally installed in the Embassy Braintree. There is a film about the project at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=9mhWjXqTKT8].

Llanelli Star – 16 November; sent in & additional information from Jeremy Buck

LONDON (Archway)



A group of neighbours is hoping to turn the Archway Methodist Hall into a theatre seating 350-450 people. It was built in 1934 with funds from passionate Methodist J Arthur Rank, who is credited with influencing the cinema-like design. The building has been empty since 1989.

The Stage – 17 November; sent in by R David Simpson;
Islington Gazette – 10 November; photo taken May 2014

LONDON (Brent Cross)

The owners of the shopping centre have announced a £1.4 million expansion project, which will more than double the size of the centre. You've already guessed that a cinema is included in the plans. The nearby six-screen Cineworld at Staples Corner closed in August.

Evening Standard – 24 October

LONDON (Bromley)

A 'senior screen' showing of *Hail, Caesar!* At the Empire was interrupted by a fire in an adjacent building. {14166}

Bromley Times – 9 November

LONDON (Burnt Oak)

The grade II listed former Savoy is to be demolished. The planning document can be seen at [tinyurl.com/gv7t4gx].

Sent in by John West

LONDON (Chiswick)

Plans have been approved for a five-screen 420-seat Picturehouse cinema in the former Ballet Rambert building. Construction is expected to start almost immediately with a view to being open by Christmas 2017.

ChiswickW4.com – 2 December

LONDON (Ealing)

A petition demanding a start date and for no changes to be made to the plans for the long-awaited cinema has reached more than 600 signatures. The developers had previously announced a start date of "December" but no completion date. In fact, work started on the site on 12 December. However, although Picturehouse has repeated its commitment to provide the cinema screens, they will not be open until 2019, a full ten years after the cinema was demolished. See p22 last Bulletin. [ealingfilmworks.com]

Ealing & Acton Gazette – 11 November; *EalingToday.co.uk* – 12 December;
Around Ealing – winter; sent in by Mike Collins & Robert Gurd

LONDON (Embankment)

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the *BFI London Film Festival* a temporary cinema operated in the Victoria Embankment Gardens between 6-16 October. The venue included cinema-style stadium seating, 4k digital projection and Dolby 7.1 surround sound. [tinyurl.com/jnftp3l]

LFF Brochure; sent in by Gavin McGrath

LONDON (Hackney)

A new boutique cinema has been opened in London Fields by Harry Ross, ex-producer of Secret Cinema. The Institute of Light includes not only a 51-seat cinema but also a record store and bookshop. [www.the-institute-of-light.com]

Time Out – 22 November;
sent in by Gavin McGrath [photo R]



LONDON (Hammersmith)

On 20 November the Cineworld (ex Regal) had scaffolding and sheeting around the building, apart from the stage, where they will start demolition. The canopy on the front has also been cut off. There is nothing yet on the hoardings to say what is going on – most likely more apartments. There are notices from loyal patrons saying goodbye to the building and many thanks for happy times spent over many years seeing films there. This cinema had a nice full-height foyer and a full stage with fly tower. {3773}

Sent in by Malcolm Gambles

LONDON (Hornchurch)

Work on demolition of the former Towers/Odeon cannot start until the Council is satisfied with a planning condition that Lidl, who want to build a supermarket on the site, will clean the road outside if any debris is deposited on it during the works. A decision on this was expected in November. Lidl has previously announced that the new frontage will display the lettering **TOWERS** from the front of the cinema.

Romford Recorder – 4 November; sent in by Ryan Jeffries

LONDON (Kensington)

On 29 October there was scaffolding around both sides of the Odeon. A notice on the hoarding said the front was being retained along with the two trees on the pavement; there was nothing about the old street lamps in front of the cinema. It looks like the long battle to save this 90-year-old building is over.

Sent in by Malcolm Gambles

LONDON (Kings Cross)

Later in 2017 Everyman is to open a luxury three-screen cinema. Before that a 32-seat pop-up cinema is keeping the space warm. It opened in mid-July but news has only just reached us.

Time Out – 21 June; sent in by Gavin McGrath

LONDON (Kingston)

The Regal is covered in scaffolding and sheeting with the name of the developer on it. It says three storeys of apartments are to be built on the roof. The inside is to be restored to incorporate a café, eating place and kids' play area. Lucky it's listed or it would have gone! The organ is still going strong at the Musical Museum in Kew.

Sent in by Malcolm Gambles

LONDON (Lewisham)

A £4m grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund has been given to transform the semi-derelict Fellowship Inn in Bellingham. There are plans for a cinema, live music venue, café etc. The grade II listed pub is where boxer Sir Henry Cooper lived and trained before his 1963 fight with Cassius Clay. There is a 200-seat hall at first floor level.

The Times – 20 October; sent in by Jon Williams

LONDON (Muswell Hill)

The grade II* listed Everyman (ex Odeon) has reopened as a five-screen cinema. The two extra screens are in 'pods' in the rear circle. The front circle has been retained and the disused front stalls have been brought back into use in screen ①. Everyman CEO Crispin Lilly said, "We have taken out a lot of MDF to reveal a stunning building."

Wood & Vale – 10 November {13783}

LONDON (Notting Hill)

The Westway Trust regeneration charity has unveiled £10m expansion plan for the area. With a potential capacity of 1,000, the Portobello Arts Hub could stage theatre, live music, film screenings and events during the Notting Hill Carnival.

The Stage – 24 November; sent in by R David Simpson

LONDON (Peckham)



A pop-up film club – the Winter Film Club – operated during December in the former Electric at 133 Rye Lane. According to *London's Silent Cinemas* website, this opened in 1908 and closed in 1915, with 500

seats. It has more recently been use as a meat and fish store. The second floor was furnished with 160 deckchairs and a 16ft by 9ft screen. Individual headphones conveyed the soundtrack. A flat floor balcony was used as a bar/concession area. It is more likely that the early cinema occupied the ground floor but this was a very imaginative use of a former cinema building. Currently empty, it is due to be transformed into Peckham Market, with offices above a sales/food area.

Sent in by Jeremy Buck [photo] & David Simpson

LONDON (Walthamstow)

The former Screen ② at the ex-Granada/EMD has been brought into use as a performance and film venue. The main foyer of the Grade II* listed cinema operates as a bar called Mirth, Marvel and Maud. Films shown included *Young Frankenstein* at Halloween and *A Matter of Life and Death*. CTA member Nigel Pitt gave two talks about the history of the building, which were well attended. Screens ① and ③ remain out of use at present.

Sent in by Jeremy Buck

LONDON (Wandsworth)

London's first 4DX screen has been unveiled in the fourteen-screen Cineworld. Motion seats and special effects are all part of the experience. See [www.cineworld.co.uk/4dx] for other venues around the country. {21150}

Time Out – 13 December; sent in by Gavin McGrath

LONDON (West End)

The grade II listed Ambassadors Theatre in Covent Garden is to have its 1913 interior stripped out and a redesigned performance space constructed. The new theatre will be called the Sondheim and will have 450 seats. The façade will be retained and many features restored and reinstated in the new design.

West End Extra – 2 December; sent in by R David Simpson

MANCHESTER (Central)



Demolition of the former Paramount/Odeon has started. There are some period and recent photos on the MEN website at: [tinyurl.com/j74g8a7]. {2430}

Manchester Evening News – 4, 5 November;
sent in by Richard Lysons & Nick Taylor [above photo]

MARLOW (Bucks)

Tom Kerridge, owner of the gastropub *Hand and Flowers* hosted a cinema and supper club at Marlow Town Hall throughout December. The Pop Up Picture House showed a range of films including cult hits and kids' classics, each accompanied by a two-course meal to match – so beef lasagne accompanied *The Italian Job* and *The Godfather*, while coconut chicken curry complemented *Slumdog Millionaire*. Ice cream was served by usherettes in the interval. Tickets for food, ice cream and film cost £35 a head,

Harden's – 3 November; sent in by John West

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Work to demolish the former Paramount/Odeon was due to start in November. Initial work includes asbestos removal so there will be no external signs until at least January. A petition to save it attracted 1,700 signatures. {3307}

Evening Chronicle (Newcastle) – 15, 26 October, 2, 9 November

NEWMARKET (Suffolk)

It is understood talks are taking place with an operator to bring a cinema back to the town.

Newmarket News – 23 November

NORTHAMPTON

A report says there will be an eight-screen multiplex as part of the redevelopment of the Greyfriars bus station. This contradicts the information on p24 of Bulletin 50/5, given by the same newspaper four months earlier. That mentions two cinema projects, one with eleven screens and the other with four.

Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 17 November

NORTHWICH (Cheshire)

The new five-screen 770-seat Odeon opened on 15 December, at Barons Quay, giving a welcome return to film entertainment following the closure of the Regal back in 2007. {54772}

Northwich Guardian – 2 November; Crewe Chronicle – 9 November;
sent in by David Simpson

NOTTINGHAM

A pop-up Christmas cinema operated in a grade II listed former County Courthouse from 14-17 December. Seasonal films such as *Frozen* and *It's a Wonderful Life* were shown.

Nottingham Post – 9 December

Another pop-up cinema operated in a polytunnel at Woodthorpe Park on 10-11 December. Patrons were advised to bring "something snugly" as there was no heating. Both shows were sold out.

Sunset Cinema Club website; sent in by Terry Hanstock

OKEHAMPTON (Devon)



Merlin Cinemas has submitted a planning application for a third screen at the New Carlton. It will be in the upstairs bar area, currently underused. {25228}

Tavistock Times Gazette – 8 December; photo taken September 2015

OLDHAM (Greater Manchester)



The Coliseum Theatre is to get a new home. The £30m building will house two theatres, part of an arts centre and heritage centre, based in an old library building. The project already has been granted £7.1m from the Arts Council. The present building opened as a circus in 1887 and was used as a cinema in 1931.

The Stage – 8 December; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson;
photo taken April 2006

OLDHAM (Greater Manchester)



As reported on p24 of the last Bulletin, the seven-screen Odeon opened on 21 October in the former Town Hall. Hundreds of residents turned out to celebrate and were treated to a spectacular free show with giant puppets, aerial dancers, musicians and performers and images projected onto the outside of the grade II listed building. Tickets were on sale at half price to mark the official opening. The new full-height glazed extension houses the stairs and escalators to the upper floors. This is quite clever, as it leaves the Town Hall building to be occupied by the auditoria. {54342}

*Oldham Evening Chronicle – 24 October;
sent in by Carl Chesworth, Richard Lysons & David Simpson [photo]*

PETERBOROUGH (Cambs)

The Council is to buy land and property to ensure the development of North Westgate will go ahead. However, the cinema element of the plan has been dropped. The developer unsuccessfully sought a judicial review of the Council's decision to grant permission for a rival cinema-led development at nearby Queensgate and is still adamant that he could deliver the project, including the cinema.

Evening Telegraph (Peterborough) – 27 October, 3 November



Plans have been submitted to turn the Broadway Theatre into 67 apartments and two retail units. The frontage of the building would be retained. The building opened as the 1,752-seat Odeon in September 1937. It was tripled in 1973 but closed in 1991. In 2001 the cinema was de-tripled and had a very expensive restoration into a 1,200-seat theatre/cinema. It suffered an arson attack in 2009 and has only had sporadic use since. {19950} *photo taken January 2003*

Peterborough Telegraph – 24 November; sent in by R David Simpson

PLYMOUTH

A public consultation on plans to demolish the Reel cinema (ex ABC) was mysteriously cancelled. The plans later resurfaced and are going to be shown to the public, prior to a planning application. A petition to save the building has attracted over 1,000 signatures. The owners say that when the new Cineworld opens, there won't be any need for it. See p24 last Bulletin.

The Herald (Plymouth) – 15, 18 October, 8, 14 December

PRESTON (Lancs)

Planning permission has been granted to carry out the upgrade to the seven-screen Vue at the Capitol Centre in Walton-le-Dale – see p24 Bulletin 50/5. {25252}

Lancashire Evening Post – 15 September

PRESTON (Lancs)

Plans for the development of the indoor market have been approved. The scheme includes a ten or eleven screen Light cinema. Completion is scheduled for 2020.

Lancashire Evening Post – 2, 12 November

RAMSGATE (Kent)

Wetherspoons is planning to open a pub in the grade II listed former Royal Victoria Pavilion in July. It will not occupy the whole of the building and is offering two units for lease. The building has stood empty since the Rank Casino moved out in 2009; it suffered a serious fire in 2011. Work started in October. {43938}

Thanet Gazette – 4 November; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

REDDITCH (Worcs)



The former Gaumont was demolished at the end of 2016 to make way for flats. It opened in November 1931, a rebuild of the former Public Hall. It was one of the batch sold to Classic in 1967 [see p7] but films ceased the following year, 1968. It later became a bingo club that closed in 1999 and more recently was a nightclub; it had been empty since that closed about two years ago. {33606}

Redditch Advertiser – 7 December; photo taken March 2006

RHYL (Denbigh)

The Pavilion Theatre is to have a multi-million pound makeover. The venue is 25 years old.

Rhyl, Prestayn & Abergelle Journal – 24 August

ROCHDALE (Greater Manchester)

A detailed planning application has been submitted for the regeneration of the Town Centre. The scheme includes a six-screen Reel cinema. Construction is planned to start late summer 2017.

Manchester Evening News – 18 November

SCARBOROUGH (North Yorks)

A developer has bought the former Argos store in Newborough and wants to demolish it to create a five-screen cinema. They are in talks with a potential operator, Savoy Cinemas of Nottinghamshire. Planning permission exists for a rival seven-screen multiplex at North Bay, to be run by Light Cinemas. The Argos developer said that the town "could not support two cinemas" but the North Bay developer said that the announcement would not change their plans.

Yorkshire Post – 10 November

Hundreds of people attended a public meeting organised by the campaign to save the Futurist. Another meeting was due to be held on 5 January. [www.savethefuturist.co.uk] contains a downloadable campaign leaflet. A vote on its fate was pushed back by the Council to January – this was the third time the vote has been delayed. There are suspicions that the Council has already decided to demolish it. See Casework p5.

*Yorkshire Coast Radio News – 3 November; sent in by David Alexander;
Scarborough Review – December; sent in by Harry Fisher;
The Stage – 10 November; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson*

SHEFFIELD

Plans have been submitted for a £60m renovation of the Meadowhall Shopping Centre, which opened in September 1990. It includes replacement of the existing eleven-screen Vue by a new cinema.

British Land Press Release – 7 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

SOUTH SHIELDS (South Tyneside)

Plans to turn the former Regent into flats are being recommended for approval. Films ceased in July 1966 and bingo took over; that closed in September 2014. Photo on front cover Bulletin 50/3. {32774}

Evening Chronicle (Newcastle) – 29 October

SOUTHBOROUGH (Kent)

Plans to replace the 360-seat Royal Victoria Hall with a new multi-purpose facility have been approved. It was built in 1900 and used as a silent cinema in the 1920s. It closed in 2015 and is scheduled for demolition. The new Southborough Hub will include a theatre space alongside a library and medical centre. Construction is expected to start in mid-2017. {43572}

The Stage – 17 November; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

STAFFORD

The three-screen Stafford Cinema (ex Odeon) has been put up for sale at £750,000 or for rental at £75,000 per year; the agents claim to have had several interested parties contact them. The cinema lease runs out in 12 months. A new 800-seat Odeon is planned for the town centre.

Express & Star – 15 December

STOKE ON TRENT (Staffs)

It is understood that negotiations are ongoing with a major operator for a ten-screen multiplex at Unity Walk in Hanley. The area already has a nine-screen Cineworld, a ten-screen Odeon and an eight-screen Vue; will one of these names be above the new cinema – and can the area sustain another ten screens?

The Sentinel – 22 November

STOURBRIDGE (Dudley)

The former Savoy is back on the market for £600,000, having only been sold last February. It is mooted that a group came forward to discuss the possibility of reopening the building as a cinema. {28388}

Express & Star – 17, 20 December; sent in by Ivan Harris

STRABANE (West Tyrone, Northern Ireland)

The seven-screen Eclipse has had a major facelift. The original four screens, which opened in 1996, have been fitted with stadium seating and larger screens. Screen ① has a Sony 4k projector. The three extra screens were added in 2008. The cinema is actually just over the border in the Irish Republic, at Lifford, Co Donegal.

Tyrone Constitution – 17 November

SWANSEA



The Odeon has been demolished. It opened in May 1967 with *The Sound of Music* in 70mm. It had 1,378 seats in stadium style at first floor level with shops below. It was tripled in May 1982 and refurbished in 1995 but closed in December 1997. It became a nightclub, which closed about two years ago. The cost of demolition rocketed from an estimated £1m to £4.1m after contractors found “unprecedented amounts of asbestos”. There are some pictures on the ITV website at [tinyurl.com/j7wy86u]. {17958}

South Wales Evening Post – 16 November; photo taken August 2007

THETFORD (Norfolk)

The growing Light circuit opened their latest cinema on 2 December 2016 with *Sully*, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* and *Moana*. It is situated in a small riverside development just off the town centre that also includes a Travelodge hotel and a soon-to-be-arriving Grand Central bar and grill. This three-screen 279-seat cinema is the circuit's first non-multiplex. Seating capacities are 91, 85 and 75. One of the circuit's trademarks, the Green Room fully licensed café/bar, is

present but another, the multi-coloured decoration in the auditoria, is absent. See p22 Bulletin 50/3. {54722}

Thetford & Brandon Times – 23, 30 November;
Eastern Daily Press – 29 November; sent in by David Simpson

THURSO (Highland)

Merlin Cinemas has announced plans to add three more screens to its currently two-screen venue. Since it acquired the cinema a year ago, it has welcomed over 70,000 customers. The extra screens will be in the former bowling alley next door. Owner Geoff Greaves said he would be looking to do the work as quickly as possible. {27141}

John O'Groats Journal – 18 November

TOWYN/TYWYN (Gwynedd)



The present cinema was taken over by the current operators in 2010 when it was renamed the Magic Lantern. It occupies the Assembly Room building of 1893 and had previously been called the Assembly Cinema, the Roxy and the Tywyn Cinema. The Magic Lantern is a 300-seat single-screen cinema equipped with a Sony 4K digital projector and Dolby 7.1 sound system. As well as showing mainstream films, it caters for live screenings of theatre performances, theme nights, live poetry and stand-up comedy and accommodates two live stages and a licensed bar.

The Magic Lantern has traced the showing of moving pictures as far back as 1900 with advertisements of screenings found for 1900 and 1904. These early screenings were most likely presented by travelling companies. They have also discovered letters from projectionists working there in 1919 and photographs of the cinema packed with soldiers during the early 1940s. This information was supplied by Mark Bond of the Magic Lantern Cinema, based on research by Jamie Terrill, a PhD student at Aberystwyth University. Does this make the Magic Lantern the oldest running cinema in Wales? I wonder if any members have any information on whether the cinema has been continuously running since 1900. {26657}

Sent in by John Skinner; photo taken September 2012

WARBOYS (Cams)

Plans for a drive-in cinema have been rejected. See p26 last Bulletin.

Hunts Post – 9 November

WELLINGTON (Shropshire)

Campaigners hoping to bring a cinema back to the town have launched a scheme to acquire a short-term lease for the town's former HSBC Bank and turn it into an 80-seat cinema. They are still continuing with their ultimate aim to reopen the former Clifton.

Shropshire Star – 14, 27 October

WELLINGTON (Somerset)

Merlin Cinemas took over the Wellesley on 18 December. It is a traditional cinema with one screen, 400 seats in stalls and circle and stage facilities. {17960}

Somerset County Gazette – 24 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth

WOODBIDGE (Suffolk)

Plans (reported on p26 of the last Bulletin) to add a 50-seat second screen at the Riverside Theatre have been approved by the Council. No start date has been given for the work.

East Anglian Daily Times – 14 November

YORK

The development at Monks Cross, which includes a new multiplex, is to go to a judicial review, following a major change to the plans.

The Press (York) – 21 October

MISCELLANY

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS FILM GUILD



A group of academics at Glasgow University is recording people's memories of the "heroic" film projectionists of the Highlands and Islands Film Guild and the screenings they put on in makeshift venues across the region. The Guild was set up after World War Two to take cinema to remote locations, giving many people their first experience of seeing the world depicted on the screen. Screenings of 16mm films were held in village halls, schools and even army huts. There was often no electricity supply and the projectionists had to cope with various technical challenges as well as the difficulties of travelling to remote locations with all their equipment. The service was publicly funded, showing films that were both educational and entertaining but the service folded due to financial difficulties in 1971.

There are tales of films being lost overboard on journeys to locations like North Ronaldsay in Orkney. There were all kinds of tales about agriculture intruding on the shows such as livestock chewing through power cables. There is evidence to suggest that certain families were resistant to it and prevented their children from attending. We also understand that there was opposition from certain areas of the church. There is mention of a minister in Scalpay on Harris walking along the queue of people waiting to get into a film show trying to persuade them out of going in to watch the films.

A special film program was held on Friday 11 November 2016 at the Eden Court in Inverness using a 16mm projector and 16mm film. The organisers hoped to recreate as close as they could a Highlands and Islands Film Guild programme from the late 1940s.

If you have any memories or can help with this research, further information and contact details are at hifilmguild.gla.ac.uk.

[\[www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-37907036\]](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-highlands-islands-37907036),
[\[www.facebook.com/hifilmguild\]](https://www.facebook.com/hifilmguild); sent in by Carl Chesworth

LONDON HAPPENINGS

A new 30-seat "highbrow" sex cinema called Erotic Paradiso has opened at the Ditto Gallery in Islington (London) showing films exploring sex and sexuality. Tickets are £10 and the cinema even has its own sex shop. Evidently this appears to have been a pop-up for 3 days only according to the *Huffington Post*.

Evening Standard (London) – 26 October; sent in by Gavin McGrath

Interactive cinema is coming to London with the audience being able to control what happens on the screen via their smartphones, with several possible endings to films. Vue is considering plans to roll out the CtrlMovie concept for the public in 2017. [\[tinyurl.com/zv39xy9\]](http://tinyurl.com/zv39xy9)

Time Out – 13 December; sent in by Gavin McGrath

PERUVIAN FIRE

At least five people have died after a fire inside a cinema at a shopping centre in Peru's capital, Lima. The blaze, at a screening for journalists, was apparently caused by a short circuit. The interior minister said that the soundproof walls in the theatre appeared to be flammable, allowing the fire to spread.

Source unknown; sent in by Gavin McGrath

LAST TANGO IN THE DARK

The infamous rape scene between Marlon Brando and his teenage co-star in *Last Tango in Paris* was non-consensual because the director wanted her to "feel humiliation". The fact has been revealed in an interview with Bernardo Bertolucci.

Daily Mail – 5 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

UNIVERSALLY UNACKNOWLEDGED

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies became a best seller around the world but a film adaptation performed so poorly that it has been named as one of the biggest flops of the year. It made \$16.4m [£13.2m] at the box-office worldwide against a budget of \$28m.

The Times – 23 November; sent in by Ian W Mitchell

NOT TO BE SNEEZED AT

A rare first edition of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* signed by Walt Disney was auctioned at the NEC on 1 December with a guide price of £28,500. There were only 24 copies printed, to persuade European film distributors to give the film an international release.

Evening Standard – 30 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

NECROLOGY

RONNIE DEUTSCH 96

Son of the late Oscar and Lily Deutsch, died on 29 November in Cheltenham. As a 10-year-old boy he was at his father's side when the first Odeon at Perry Barr, Birmingham was opened in 1930.

Daily Telegraph – 8 December

LIZ SMITH 95

Probably best known as Nana in *The Royle Family*. She received a BAFTA Award for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Maggie Smith's mother in the film *A Private Function*.

BBC TV – 26 December

PETER VAUGHAN 93

In 1967 he received second billing opposite Frank Sinatra in *The Naked Runner*. More recently he starred as Grouty in *Porridge* and as Maester Aemon in *Game of Thrones*.

Daily Mirror – 7 December;

JIMMY PERRY 93

Together with David Croft he wrote *Dad's Army*, *It Ain't Half Hot, Mum*, *Hi-de-Hi!*, *You Rang, M'Lord?*, *Are You Being Served?* and *'Allo 'Allo*.

Daily Mail – 24 October; *The Stage* – 10 November;

JEAN ALEXANDER 90

Best known for playing Hilda Ogden in *Coronation Street* [1964-1987] and Auntie Wainwright in *Last of the Summer Wine*.

The Stage – 3 November

ANDREW SACHS 86

Born in Berlin, his family emigrated to London in 1938 to escape persecution from the Nazis. He is probably best known for playing Spanish waiter Manuel in *Fawlty Towers*.

Daily Mail – 2 December

DEBBIE REYNOLDS 84

Best known for playing opposite Gene Kelly and Donald O'Connor in *Singin' in the Rain*. She sadly died the day after her daughter, Carrie Fisher [see below].

BBC TV News – 29 December

ROBERT VAUGHN 83

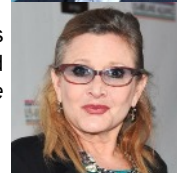
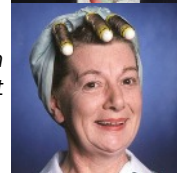
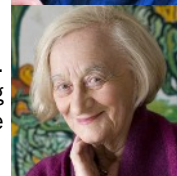
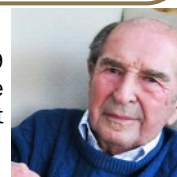
Probably best known as spy Napoleon Solo in *The Man from UNCLE*. He is the last of *The Magnificent Seven* to pass away. He also appeared in the Steve McQueen film *Bullitt*.

Daily Mirror – 12 November

CARRIE FISHER 60

Best known as Princess Leia in *Star Wars*, she was the daughter of Debbie Reynolds [see above] and Eddie Fisher. She also wrote *Postcards from the Edge*, which was turned into a movie.

BBC TV News – 27 December



CINEMA BUSINESS

COMPETITION

The acquisition of Odeon & UCI Cinemas by AMC Theatres (reported on p27 of Bulletin 50/5) is to be investigated by the Competition and Markets Authority. AMC has only one cinema in the UK, the sixteen-screen multiplex at the Northern Warehouse in Manchester. Odeon has two multiplexes in the City. In 2012 The AMC at Broadway Plaza in Birmingham was taken over by Odeon. The Office of Fair Trading then conducted an investigation because of a possible monopoly owing to Odeon's existing operation in New Street, finding in Odeon's favour. Odeon CEO Paul Donovan stepped down after the deal was completed.

The Times, Ireland – 20 October; Daily Mail – 9 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

A deal by Cineworld to buy the Empire in London's Leicester Square has been approved by the Competition & Markets Authority. It is part of a £94m purchase of five sites; the others are at Basildon, Hemel Hempstead, Bromley & Poole.

Evening Standard (London) – 12 December

ODEON

Odeon has installed a digital system whereby they can control all their cinemas from one central location. It allows them to build cloud-based playlists, create scheduled, handle content and KDMs down to screen level.

Unknown Internet Source dated 27, 30 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth

Odeon was due to open 20 of its 121 locations on Christmas Day with 120 screenings, including the new *Star Wars*. The move provoked anger from Church leaders.

Mail on Sunday – 27 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

CINEWORLD

Cineworld saw its revenues increase by 14.6% in the 45 weeks to 10 November, helped by a series of successful films. *Bridget Jones' Baby* had only been expected to make £30m but drew in £140m. The company operates 2,103 screens in the UK.

Daily Mail – 16 November; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

EVERYMAN

The upmarket cinema chain saw box-office takings rise 49% to £12.13m between January and June but has warned that the final months of the year could be shaky. The lack of blockbusters like *Star Wars* and *007* is blamed for the shortfall. Heavy investment in its estate and planned openings led to a pre-tax loss of £295,000 for the first six months of 2016.

Yorkshire Post, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail, Metro – 21 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth, Ian W Mitchell & Barry Quinton

CINEWORLD BREAK-IN



The fourteen-screen Cineworld at Ashton under Lyne [Tameside, Greater Manchester – pictured above in May 2007] was closed for at least one day following an overnight break-in and arson attack on 26 October. The Fire Service was called at 12:15am to deal with a fire in a metal bin and the police were called to investigate the incident. No-one was hurt and patrons with advance tickets were given a full refund.

Tameside reporter – 26, 27 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

PRICE WARS?

Some Vue cinemas are having special offers: all tickets £4.99 at Barrow, Birkenhead, Hartlepool, Hull, Lancaster, Merthyr & Thanet; food and drink, 3 items for £9.99, £10.99 or £11.99 at certain other sites – the only one in common with the ticket offer seems to be Merthyr Tydfil. In Loughborough [Leics] a new Cineworld opened in May, and it's in a price war with the existing Odeon (ex-Empire/Essoldo/Classic/Curzon/Reel [etc!]) – but it's still charging £5 compared to the Odeon's £4 (both every day, all day). Of course, Ts&Cs apply!

Vue website – sent in by David Simpson & Martin Tapsell

SCREEN MACHINE

Regional Screen Scotland has raised the necessary funds to carry out a major refit of their mobile cinema, which will add a minimum of six more years to its operational life. The current vehicle has been on the road since 2005, spending up to 48 weeks a year bringing the big screen experience to rural and island communities.

[tinyurl.com/zgrxsex]

Creative Scotland Press Release – 6 December

BLACKOUT FRIDAY

Black Friday lived up to its name when a power cut placed parts of London's West End in darkness on 25 November. The electricity failed at 5:20pm and affected theatres, cinemas, restaurants and shops in the area of Soho, Shaftesbury Avenue, Piccadilly Circus and Chinatown.

Daily Mail – 26 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

IMAX VIRTUAL REALITY



IMAX is to open a Virtual Reality Centre at the Odeon Printworks in the centre of Manchester [pictured above in June 2006]. The report said "before the end of the year" so presumably 2016.

Variety – 11 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

2001 IN 70MM

A new 70mm print of *2001: A Space Odyssey* has been struck in the USA. It will have two extended runs every year for the next five years. One will be at the Egyptian Theater in Hollywood and the other at the Aero Theater in Santa Monica.

LA Times – 6 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

FEAST OF FILMS

Almost 900 feature films were distributed to cinemas across the UK in 2016, an average of 16 per week. Box Office is set to grow 2% year-on-year to over £1bn but attendance is static at 2.7 visits per person. The top 40 films increased their market share.

Unknown Internet Source dated 9 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth

MISS SAIGON SETS RECORD

Miss Saigon has set a new record for an event cinema release, taking £2.03m at the box-office. A film version of the recent 25th anniversary London run was broadcast to cinemas in the UK on 16 October. The previous record of £1.9m was held by *Billy Elliot* when it was screened live in 2014.

The Stage – 27 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

NORTHERN DESIGN AWARDS

Bess Sturman, the interior designer of the 57-seat Ilkley Cinema (West Yorks) project, won the category for Commercial Interior Design at the ceremony held in Leeds on 11 November. See photo p29 Bulletin 50/5. {50929}

Telegraph & Argus (Bradford) – 1 November

Hull regeneration company Wikeland Group won the Commercial Developer of the Year award partly for its work on the Flemgate project in Beverley (East Yorks) incorporating the six-screen Parkway cinema.

Hull Daily Mail – 20 October

LETTERS

NEW LIFE FOR ART DECO GEMS



The Capitol Horsham in March 2009

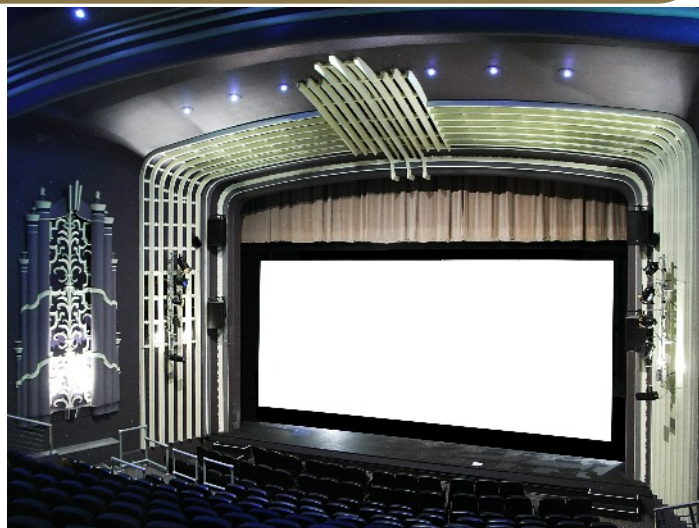
Bulletin editor Harry Rigby raised an intriguing question in Vol50 No6 when he asked why a building is often converted at great expense for use either as a cinema or an Arts Centre when a perfectly good, purpose-built art deco cinema, now closed and unused, often sadly stands nearby. It's a question that has often puzzled me and one that I found myself wondering about again when in November 2016 my wife and I attended a sold-out Bay City Rollers gig at The Capitol in Horsham, West Sussex.

Built by Union Cinemas, the Capitol opened as the Ritz in 1936 and was designed by LH Parsons of Goodman and Kay along with Frank Verity and Samuel Beverley. In October 1937 ABC took it over and ran it until selling it to Horsham District Council in 1982. The council converted it into Horsham Arts Centre, opening it for Christmas 1984. In 2002 the site was closed and over the next twenty months £6million was spent upgrading the site. Today it's a stunning art complex that houses a theatre, cinema, studio, gallery, café and lounge bar. The most striking aspect of the work is a beautiful glass foyer, the full height and width of the building, which has been added onto the original brick front. It houses the box office and café and is an exhilarating area to unwind and relax.

Horsham isn't a big town but the Capitol stands out as a cultural beacon and its lead should be followed by many other towns across the country. Arguments of finance and the suitability of former cinemas are always used as an excuse not to be bold and adventurous but you should never believe everything you're told. Most cinemas built during the 1930s were built to last – literally. They really are perfect places to either show films again (especially since the introduction of digital) or to serve the local community as a space for theatre and films.

I was born and raised in Portsmouth where, after the Second World War, around forty cinemas entertained the masses. They are now all closed and the City is currently served by a cavernous twelve-screen Vue multiplex situated in an elitist leisure and shopping complex next to the historic dockyard. Some of the former cinemas, though, are still standing and one, in particular, would still be packing them in if it had been given the 'Capitol treatment'. That site is the former Odeon in the North End district of Portsmouth, which currently lies derelict except for a Sainsbury's Local that occupies the front half of the once long entrance foyer. When it closed in 2008 I was working there as the senior projectionist and can personally vouch that the building was still in excellent condition. Odeon, before Terra Firma merged them with UCI, were prepared to maintain their sites if they made money and the Odeon Portsmouth always turned a profit. A theatre, cinema screens, a café – it could all have been incorporated into what is a huge building sat on an equally huge piece of land that contains a large car park and borders a busy high street. Portsmouth, with a population density that exceeds London, desperately needs more entertainment venues. The former Odeon, purpose-built for such activities, could have changed that. But instead it stands empty and the latest attempt at bringing cinema to the City is a single-screen cinema situated in a converted grade II listed former boathouse. As Harry asks, why convert when you already have the buildings and facilities in place?

Mike Whitcombe



The main auditorium of the Capitol Horsham

LEICESTER THEATRES

In *Old Theatres* magazine No25 there is a small article about Leicester's Haymarket Theatre, which opened in 1974 but has been dark for nine years. There is a possibility of it being reopened as a base for training and teaching students with a possibility of professional assistance. The Haymarket is situated almost exactly opposite the site of the Leicester Palace – a Frank Matcham building dating from 1901. It closed for a month in 1956 and permanently in 1959. In its later years it turned into *Follies de Paris* and striptease. I remember Penny Page, Leicester's own stripper. Some of the older variety acts appeared there including Jimmy Wheeler and Old Mother Riley (presumably Roy Rolland). There was also a young comedian called Bill Maynard who came from Leicester.

One Saturday night my family were walking in Leicester and the paper seller at the Clock Tower had a placard showing "Leicester Theatre and Cinema to close". I knew that this must refer to the Palace and the Floral Hall. The contents of the theatre were auctioned in 1959 and I went round the theatre on an open day. I still remember sitting in a box in the theatre and thinking it was a crying shame to pull it down; I still do. Leicester Corporation appeared to be uninterested in the building. I still have the auctioneers' catalogue. The Floral Hall would have closed around the same time as the Palace as the contents of both buildings were auctioned together.

The Floral Hall cinema was situated at the back of the Palace and was approached by a long tunnel, which ran the length of the building. I never attended a performance there but went part way into the building on the open day. The long tunnel had peeling paintwork and the auditorium was only partly lit so I could not see much of the interior. I believe it had gas lighting inside. I remember the Floral Hall as the home of horror as the majority of the films it showed were [X] or [H] rated. There were frequently queues of old ladies outside the cinema waiting to go in. I was always surprised as I thought that older ladies would have been more interested in seeing *Walt Disney*. They did however show the animated version of *Animal Farm*, which the other cinemas in the City avoided. The film is now available on DVD. There is nothing attractive on the site today, just shops.

Ian Patterson

MILITARY CINEMAS

I would be grateful if any of your readers could give me examples of where members of the public have been, or are currently, admitted to theatres, cinemas, dances and so forth in buildings which are within military establishments. It would be interesting to know if such admissions were, or are, allowed without vetting individual members of the audience. One or two past examples come to mind: The Globe at Stonehouse Naval establishment, the Longmoor Kitchener, Brampton Park Theatre and possibly the Bordon Phoenix. I am aware that these are no longer used, due to the closure of the bases but further examples past and present would be welcome. I can be contacted on my email address below.

Ted Bottle [bridgetlift12@yahoo.co.uk]

AMC'S ACQUISITION OF ODEON AND UCI CINEMAS

By the time this edition of our Bulletin is published, AMC will have acquired Odeon and UCI Cinemas, all hurdles with regard to possible reduction of competition and potential objections to the sale having now been cleared. The new parent company will have officially 'taken possession' of the circuit on 1 January 2017. I understand AMC has two initial plans for the British and continental European portfolio of cinema properties. They have allocated a very substantial budget for the refurbishment and technical upgrading of the estate. Secondly, it is the intention to have every one of their cinemas branded Odeon.

The AMC executive are naturally abreast of Odeon and UCIs' financial performance and, once the dust has settled, will be in a position to assess the degree of viability of individual cinemas and no doubt over time there will be acquisitions, new-builds and disposals as with any other large, commercial chain of operations be they cinemas, supermarkets or other corporate businesses. New Odeons already planned or under construction are unlikely to be cancelled as such developments only go ahead after the board are satisfied there is a sound commercial case for the investment. We will only know the full impact of the acquisition in due course of time.

In my experience, Odeon remains by far the best of the large circuits and the name must rank as one of the longest established and most recognisable brands in the entertainment industry. The very longevity of Odeon makes the brand such a valuable one despite the fact that an Odeon manager from the 'sixties would hardly recognise the Odeons of today – with one exception, the Odeon Leicester Square in London. This fine flagship is now unique in retaining its original configuration and facilities. Whilst, over the decades, there has been much investment in the building and its equipment – mainly during its Rank Organisation custodianship – and numerous superficial changes (some more welcome than others), it nevertheless remains a wonderful place in which to enjoy film entertainment. There can be few in the film industry who are not aware of the value of a film being premiered or showcased there and few manufacturers of cinema kit who wouldn't give their eye teeth to be able to announce: "As installed at the..." On a personal level, I sometimes make a 400 mile round trip to enjoy certain films on the theatre's 47 foot screen set within its original 52 foot rectangular proscenium arch and from the luxury of an armchair in its vast balcony. I'm old enough to remember when most Odeons and other large cinemas offered an experience not entirely dissimilar, if a tad less grand. Now that the erstwhile Empire Leicester Square is much like other multiplexes and less well configured than many since the uncomfortable twinning of the former Empire ① and no other large cinemas survive as such in the West End, the importance of the Odeon is greater than ever. Now that exclusivity of product is virtually history, it is to be hoped imaginative programming, like the recent hosting of a large part of the *London Film Festival* and perhaps more utilisation of its stage facilities will keep the 'last citadel' in its rightful place – the forefront.

May I suggest a letter from our Association's Executive to that of AMC, welcoming the new custodians and underlining our appreciation and support of Odeon cinemas with special mention of the circuit's flagship which is so precious to so many of us.

James Bettley

LIVERPOOL LIME STREET



Yesterday [29 October] I took a wander up Lime Street just to see what was going on. As expected the old ABC Futurist cinema along with a few buildings to the left of it are gone. The demolition crew are no longer on site but curiously have left the neighbouring and now very dilapidated ABC Scala still standing. I have no idea of what the future holds here.

Alan Hodson [photo]; also sent in by David Williams

PUTTING YOUR FEET UP

Cinema seats have improved greatly in recent years with headrests, cupholders and cushioned leather now the norm rather than the exception. You can even 'upgrade' to an 'executive' or 'premier' seat at certain sites although, sadly, the increased cost will not get you any extra scenes in the movie that you're watching! The very latest in cinema seat luxury now appears to be reclining seats with Odeon Cinemas announcing that their new ten-screen multiplex in Bournemouth will have reclining seats that take chilling out at the movies to a whole new level. I have no idea whether such seats are already the norm at other 'plexes who charge too much for admission already but the concept really doesn't grab me. I can't imagine anything more annoying than the person in front of me adjusting his seat to get comfortable, especially when the chair goes back and a head lurches into my legspace. And what about the person who does recline their chair? If the seat in front remains upright will their view of the screen be obstructed?

Many of you might say that Odeon have done the maths and all will be well. But having worked for Odeon and seen the reality of their promises, I wouldn't count on it. Reclining seats might well turn out to be the best thing since Cinerama, yet I can't help feeling it's just another gimmick to satisfy those customers who treat a visit to the flicks as an excuse to text on their phone while eating and drinking as noisily as possible! But maybe I'm just being a Grinch. If truth be told, I'm still disappointed with Odeon for closing the ABC in Bournemouth. With its beautiful screen ①, the ABC is one of the few cinematic treats remaining on the south coast and should be staying open.

Mike Whitcombe

MULTIPLEX RISING



The picture shown in the above piece, on p29 of the last Bulletin, shows one of the many restaurants and bars incorporated in the Bournemouth development. The new Odeon is down the road on the left in the picture and the latest news is that electricians are installing the primary wiring prior to fitting out. I attach a picture of the new cinema.

John Thornley

Editor's Note: See Newsreel p24 for details about Bournemouth

A MUST for your collection **CINEMAS IN BRITAIN**

A History of Cinema Architecture

by Richard Gray

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

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

Special price for CTA members

£29.50 + £6.00 postage from

Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer

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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

A regular column celebrating our wonderful listed cinemas.
All images come from the CTA Archive.

80 Years



Rex – 10 Argyle Street, Stonehouse, Scotland.
Opened 22 January 1937. Architect unknown. Grade B listed.



Odeon (Reel) – Blossom Street, York. Opened 1 February 1937.
Architects: Robert Bullivant/Harry Weedon. Grade II listed.



News Theatre / Tyneside Cinema – 10 Pilgrim Street,
Newcastle upon Tyne. Opened 1 February 1937.
Architect: George Bell (Dixon & Bell). Grade II listed.

SMALL ADS

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

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

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

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

ARCHIVE

ARCHIVE ENQUIRIES

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

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

ARCHIVE OPPORTUNITIES

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

Please email [archive@cta-uk.org].

HELP THE ARCHIVE IDENTIFY CINEMAS

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

SENDING DONATIONS BY POST OR EMAIL

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

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

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

London's West End Cinemas

by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.

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

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



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


Published in collaboration with English Heritage.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The CTA is now on Facebook & Twitter!

Nothing will match the analogue experience of the clatter of film through the projector gate, or the pleasure of turning the pages of the *Bulletin* and *Picture House*. But, just as movies have gone to digital and almost all print media now has an online presence, the CTA cannot ignore the part that social media plays in most people's lives these days. Facebook and Twitter are by far the most prevalent with about 1.7 billion users worldwide for Facebook and 317 million active users of Twitter.

Many organisations such as ours have discovered that it is essential to increase the reach and engagement with the general population to lead and support local campaigns that are already using these tools. Facebook works by creating a virtual network of people's family and friends activities and Twitter by sending short messages and encouraging readers to pass them on. This is how something can go 'viral' with each reader posting or re-Tweeting to their own followers, whether a couple of dozen, a few hundred or more. This is not a replacement for diplomacy but puts an immediate message into the hands of everyone with a smartphone, tablet or desktop computer.

 You don't have to sign up but just tap [facebook.com/cinematheatreorguk] into your browser and see what we are doing to support the cause of cinema heritage. Try Twitter by entering [twitter.com/ctheatreassoc] and click on 'Tweets & Replies' to see what we are posting. If you have a smartphone or tablet, then you could try the apps, which can be downloaded from Google Play or the Apple Store. Alternatively, click on the icons now at the foot of each page on our website. If you like what you see, then please join in the conversation; @cta_archive and @scottishcinemas already do!



Mike Wood

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-38057105] A BBC News item on the American book *After The Final Curtain*, featured in these pages previously: [afterthefinalcurtain.net]
- ★ [tinyurl.com/h9qpju9] A page from the *Newcastle Chronicle* with photos of the Paramount/Odeon in its heyday. The building is currently being demolished. {3307}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/zlhyd58] A 6 minute video from BBC Lancashire about the Regent Blackpool. {6549} *Sent in by Billy Speight*
- ★ [www.splicehere.website] A website about a forthcoming documentary about the champions of projected film. Has a blog.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/jxg6h94] A page from the *York Press* about the former Rialto cinema. There was a feature about the cinema on p4/5 of Bulletin 37/3 [May/June 2003]. *Sent in by Philip Stevens*
- ★ [vimeo.com/82454848] A 3½ min sound recording of Nicholas Martin playing the Wurlitzer from the Gaumont Palace Exeter (now in the Burley Fen Collection) with a gallery of 1930s still photos from the CTA Archive.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/grkh6a7] A page from the *Daily Mail* about a bus driver from Stoke on Trent who has built a replica 17-seat ABC cinema in his back garden, with red tabs and a 17ft by 7ft screen.

Your responses to anniversary articles in both *Picture House* and *The Bulletin* are encouraged and welcomed. Please send them to the Bulletin Editor and we will print them in future editions.

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to be able to send a warm welcome to the following new members. They are listed in order of joining: Matthew White, Tim Adams, John Moreton, Simon Hoskins, Jonathan Carpenter and John Powell.

DONATIONS

Members continue to demonstrate their generosity by include a donation when renewing their subscriptions. We send our grateful thanks to the following: PJ Adams, M Armstrong, DC Bishop, EG Bottle, LS Bull, RNR Charlesworth, BF Collins, IC Cooper, NA Corbett, MS Crowle, R Duerden, L Essex, DN Faircloth, H Fisher, DJ Gardiner, PJ Goff, VF Harvey, GE Hooper, J Kennett, S Kieley, P King, CP Kisicki, A Lazou, AJ Marston, KC McFarlane, IP Nash, JM Pritchard, DM Riches, MJ Roberts, FRA Rosen, JG Rumble, JD Simmonds, C Simmons, RD Simpson, R Smirk, BR Stevenson, KA Tricker, GJ Waglan, KM Wakefield, WE Watters, MW Weston, JWH White, AG Williams and RW Woodin.

IN MEMORIAM

Sincere condolences are extended to the families and friends of the following members for whom notice of their passing has been received since our last issue.

Lawrence Geary of Nottingham died aged 75 in July. He joined the CTA in 1996. Laurence organised two plaques in Nottingham for the 100 years of Cinema celebration. He was photographed [below] with Patricia, the daughter of Alfred Hitchcock, at that commemorating Alma Lucy Reville (Lady Hitchcock) near where she was born in Nottingham. The second, near its site, commemorated the first public screening of films at the Grand Theatre.



David Aspinall of Bolton died aged 73 on 31 October 2016. He had been a CTA member since 2004. Rodney Welch died in May 2016 in a care home in Potters Bar, his home town. Rodney joined the CTA in 2004 and became a Life Member two years later. Geoffrey Day of Gravesend, died at the age of 90 in July 2016. He joined in 1982.

Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary



Laurence Geary and Patricia O'Connell (née Hitchcock)

FAREWELL TO THE ABC BOURNEMOUTH

By Adrian Cox

My brother David and I put on the special film screening of the 1980 sci-fi film *Flash Gordon* on Wednesday 13 October 2016 at the ABC cinema Bournemouth. Our screening included a selection of THORN-EMI era day titles and some old film trailers from the 1960s and 1970s. We also screened our own very short film *The Last ABC*, which is an affectionate salute to the ABC/Westover cinema. All of these were converted by David to DCP (Digital Cinema Package) to enable ease of projection using the ABC cinema's computerised 2k projector. We also compiled our own quad film poster and programme with details of the Bournemouth ABC cinema's history and notes on the film *Flash Gordon* for the occasion. The film was hired by Odeon from Park Circus Films and included in the £2,000 cinema hire costs. It was a successful and enjoyable occasion made even more memorable by the reinstatement of the screen tabs and tab warmers in ABC ☺ especially for this event. The ABC team even repainted the walls of the upper foyer to ensure that the ABC was going out in style!

The ABC finally closed on 4 January – see Newsreel p24.

All photos by the author



In 1969 the ABC as the Westover was now called, closed for nine months for a £250,000 modernisation scheme that remodelled the interior of the building. The art deco front was hidden from view and the giant auditorium was divided. Warren Mitchell opened the ABC Film Centre now under the ownership of EMI on the 13th June 1970.

ABC