

50
years

CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

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BULLETIN

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May / June 2017



The former Odeon/ Astoria Brixton, now the Academy, which we will be visiting in July; photo taken May 2003



The Hollywood Cinema in Great Yarmouth, which is to have an extensive makeover; photo taken July 2007

FROM YOUR EDITOR

There are two articles in this edition on the cinemas of Northern Ireland. I have left them both in as, although they overlap a little, they are seen from a different viewpoint. The CTA visited the Province in 2014; that visit report is on pages 14-19 of Bulletin 49/1.

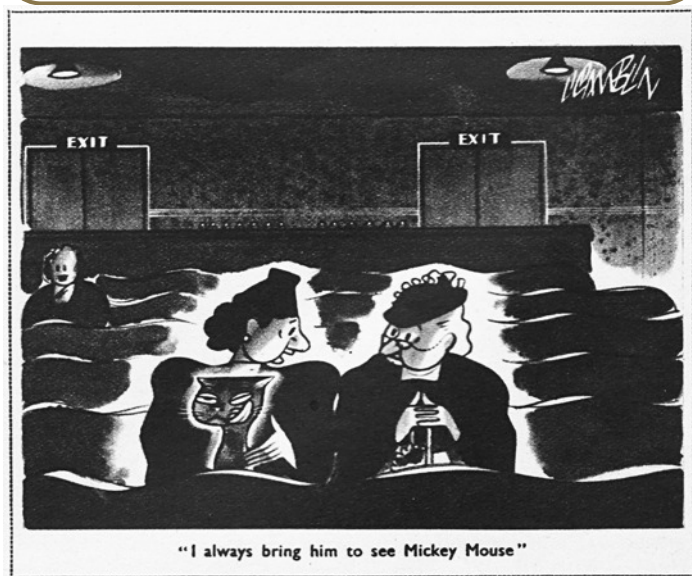


Hugh Sykes' article continues with a visit to Dublin and mentions the LUAS tram system. I went to a model railway exhibition in York over Easter and there was a superb model of the trams in O'Connell Street in 1949. The detailing was excellent and the cinemas were even showing films of that year. Above is a photograph of the model of the Metropole and the Capitol; there was also the Carlton and the Rotunda (later Ambassador). The Savoy isn't there as, if I remember rightly from when I was in Dublin, it was on the other side of the street, opposite the Carlton.

Finally, another tight issue so I have again no room for holiday snaps. As I said last time, please don't let that stop you from sending in more from your holidays this year. I will be at the AGM in Newbridge and also on the Brixton visit in July – details opposite. I am still looking to retire from the post of Bulletin Editor so you have two opportunities to chat to me if you would like to take over. See you there!

Harry Rigby, Editor CTA Bulletin

CARTOON CORNER



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

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
TUESDAY 20 JUNE**

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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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.
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Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby
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VISITS AND EVENTS

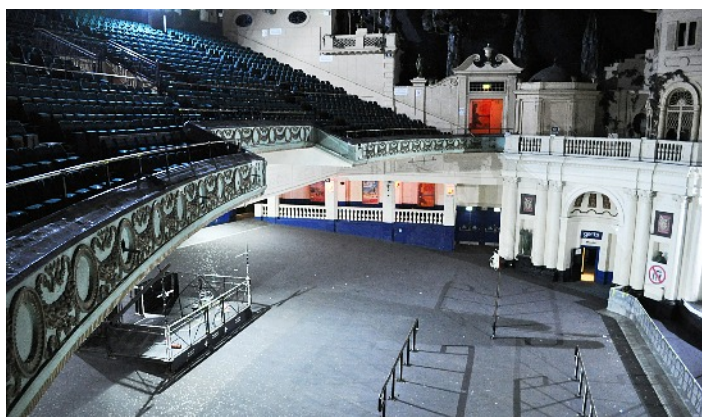
Brixton Beauties

Sunday 2 July ; organised by Ken Roe

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON (GRADE II*)

211 STOCKWELL ROAD, SW9 9SL

Our second 50th Anniversary visit of the year that coincides day and date, is to the Odeon Astoria as it was known as a cinema back in 1967. The Astoria Theatre was the first of four magnificent Astorias built by independent exhibitor A Segal in the inner London suburbs (Streatham is now a multi-screen Odeon, Finsbury Park is now a church and Old Kent Road has been demolished). The Brixton Astoria was opened on 19 August 1928 with Al Jolson in *The Jazz Singer* plus a variety show on the stage. Designed by architects Edward Albert Stone & Thomas R Somerford, with interior decorations in an Atmospheric / Italian Renaissance style by Marc Henri, seating was provided for 2,982 with 1,899 in the stalls & 1,083 in the circle, beneath twinkling stars in the ceiling. It was equipped with a Compton 3 Manual/12 Rank organ. It was taken over by Paramount Pictures in December 1930 and by Oscar Deutsch's Odeon Theatre circuit in November 1939. The Odeon Astoria was closed as a cinema by the Rank Organisation on 29 July 1972 with Charles Bronson in *Red Sun* and Christopher Jones in *The Looking Glass War*.



The interior of the Academy Brixton in October 2013

The Rank Organisation removed the stalls seats and converted the building into a Sundown discotheque, which only lasted four months. It was then used for storage by the Rank Organisation for several years, during which time it was given a Grade II listing in January 1974. It re-opened as the Fair Deal, a rock concert venue with a concert by UB40 on 12 March 1982 but the operators went bankrupt and it closed in April 1982. It re-opened as the Academy on 7 October 1983 with a concert by Eek-a-Mouse. In March 1990 it was upgraded to a Grade II* listed building. Photo on front cover. {1244}

ELECTRIC BRIXTON

1 TOWN HALL PARADE, BRIXTON ROAD, SW2 1RJ



The Electric/Palladium as The Fridge in 2004

Most visits are for members only
details in the full Bulletin

CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II



A site visit has been undertaken to the Ritz at Nuneaton, which is currently offered for sale at the price of £650,000. It has now transpired that a major supermarket chain has been assembling a series of sites around the cinema; this has the potential of aiding regeneration of the area, yet alternatively could pose a threat to the building's future. {25909} Photo above taken August 2004.



The project to renovate the Globe at Stockton-On-Tees has now resumed and a letter of support has been requested of the Association; this has been duly forwarded. It is reported that asbestos removal is currently in progress. {1835} Photo above taken June 2006.

Unlisted

The application to demolish the Grand at Banbury has been re-submitted following modification; the CTA has renewed its objection. A local campaigner is also actively promoting the building's retention. {27592}

A second planning application for redevelopment of the Regent at Bournemouth has been rejected, again on grounds of adverse visual impact upon the surrounding conservation area. Unfortunately, the survival of the main structure rearward of the façade continues to remain unlikely and emphasis is now being directed toward salvage of consequential extant features, of which the murals attributed to Frank Barnes are notably significant. {20081}

An attempt is to be made to incorporate filmic references in the redeveloped (multi-named but latterly) Cineworld in Chelsea. {17033}

Excepting comment upon treatment of the façade of the People's Palace / Gaumont in Bristol, proposals regarding its redevelopment have been deemed acceptable. The Theatres Trust's recommendation for a detailed survey to be executed prior to commencement of operations has been endorsed. {20707}

More Casework in the full Bulletin

PUBLICATIONS

Back Numbers Available

BULLETINS

We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 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.
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all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
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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.
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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.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50th Anniversary; Plaza Stockport; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Majestic Leeds; Pascal J Stienlet.

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'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.

These are special offer prices for readers of the CTA Bulletin.

Ordering

For books and other items except DVDs, please add £3.00 for post and packing for orders up to £20.00 in value, £6.00 for orders from £20.01 to £40.00 and £11.00 for orders above £40.01. For DVDs, please add £3.00 for up to 3 DVDs and £6.00 for more than 3 DVDs.

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Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

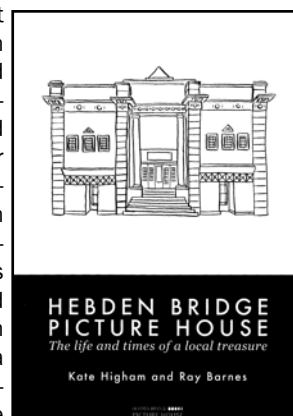
Hebden Bridge Picture House

The Life and Times of a Local Treasure

by Kate Higham and Ray Barnes. ISBN 9781527202993.

190 pages, paperback, £10.00 plus £3 postage. Available from the cinema at New Road, Hebden Bridge HX7 8AD, or online at www.hebdenbridgepicturehouse.co.uk/buy-history-book

The Picture House opened in 1921 and this interesting book charts it's eventful history up to the present day. The building was acquired by an enlightened local Council in 1971 and is still under local authority control today. It has survived many closure and conversion threats and in December 2015 was severely damaged by flooding. Since then the building has been refurbished and re-opened, with enthusiastic support from an active Friends Group. This book also contains a potted history of the development of cinema in the UK and two useful appendices; a gazetteer of historic cinemas in the Calder Valley and a section about feature films shot in and around Hebden Bridge.



Kings Theatre

The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of Brooklyn's Wonder Theatre

by Matt Lambros. Available through Amazon, etc but possibly not on UK site. US price is \$49.99, hardback

On 7 September 1929 the Loew's Kings Theatre in Brooklyn opened its doors to the public for the first time. Less than 50 years later they were shut, seemingly for good. Designed by the Rapp & Rapp architecture firm in the French Baroque style, the Kings is not only an architecturally important piece of Brooklyn history but from community standpoint as well. Many Brooklynites had their first date at the theatre, or walked across the stage during their high school graduation. Now, after almost 40 years of darkness, it reopened in 2015, to become the largest indoor theatre in Brooklyn and the third largest in New York City. It is a place for the community to gather once again, hosting everything from Broadway shows to concerts. Take a trip through the history of the Kings via photographs and artefacts spanning the theatre's heyday through its renovation. Watch the theatre return to its original splendour and learn for yourself why it's called Brooklyn's "Wonder Theater".



50TH ANNIVERSARY TOOTING GRANADA VISIT

A report of the CTA visit on 26 February by Mike Wood

Probably most CTA members were not aware that the very first of our long tradition of group visits started fifty years ago to the very day, to the (then) Granada (1931 Cecil Masey with Theodore Komisarjevsky) in Tooting, South London, when still on film. It might seem obvious now, since it has achieved iconic status as the only Grade I listed cinema building and dubbed the cathedral of the movies but I am not so sure that it would have seemed so back in the day, when there were many more fine cinemas starting to disappear. The listing was not granted until 1972 and it is worth reading the Historic England assessment:



An early photo of the Granada Tooting at night
courtesy Cinema Treasures

A world class cinema – without doubt the most lavishly decorated interior of any cinema in Britain and among the most lavish in Europe; the finest evocation of the sumptuous movie palaces of the 1920s and 1930s, the flagship of the Granada circuit. It is the masterpiece of its creators – Sidney Bernstein, the architect Cecil Masey, the mural artists Lucien le Blanc (possibly alias Leslie le Blond) and Alex Johnstone but, towering above all, the inspiration and imagination of Theodore Komisarjevsky, the Russian expatriate prince and theatrical impresario, who is now remembered chiefly for his cinema design. The building closed as a cinema in 1973, reopening as a bingo club three years later.

So where better to go as part of our programme of fiftieth birthday celebrations and who better to lead us there than long-time London cinema walks and past visits organiser, Ken Roe. A good few did the full walk, starting at Balham, Gateway to the South but your correspondent joined the circle queue at the hallowed doors. This was supervised by the curmudgeonly uniformed commissioner [R], who looked vaguely familiar and who nearly got run over in the rush on doors opening.



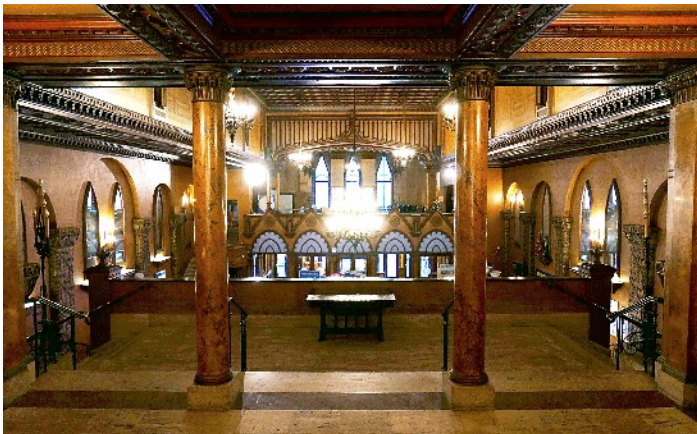
From then on and split into two groups of about forty each, it was a good time exploring the Gothic interior, which is familiar but always worth another look and including an organ interlude, recorded but the console was on display. A catch-up with tea and biscuits and old friends finished a heart-warming birthday bash for the old girl (I mean the CTA of course). Our thanks go to Ken Roe for organising the visit and to Gala Bingo for hosting us and looking after this wonderful building.

Photos by the author, except where noted.

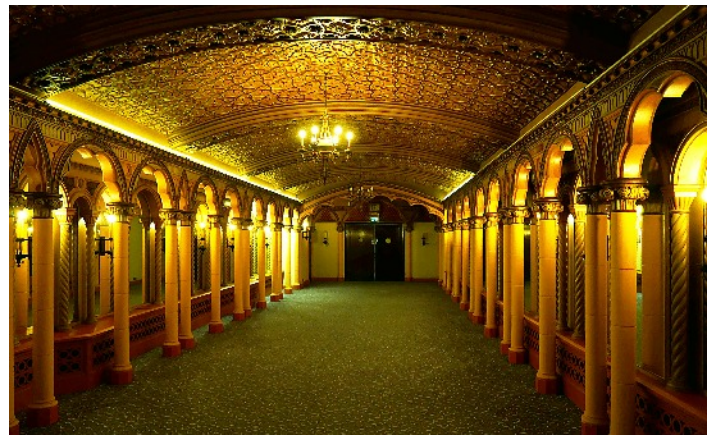
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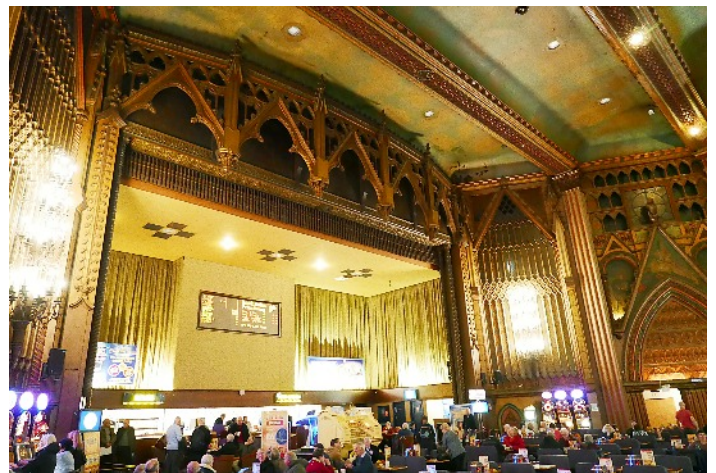
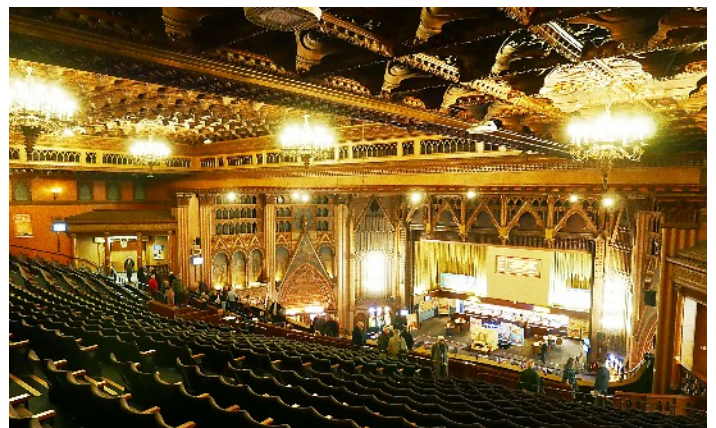
[\[cinematreasures.org/theaters/9424\]](http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/9424)



The entrance hall of the Granada Tooting



The hall of mirrors



Two views of the auditorium of the Granada Tooting

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

A History of Cinema Architecture
by Richard Gray

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

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

Special price for CTA members

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Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer

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CINEMA NEWS – 50 YEARS AGO

When the CTA was founded in 1967...

Compiled by Harry Rigby & Ken Roe

May

- 4th The première of *The Professionals* is held at the Odeon Marble Arch. [R] {1830}
- 6th The 923-seat Rex in Lewisham [SE London] closes and is converted into a bingo club. It reopened as a twin cinema two years later; this venture lasted until 1986. {30709}
- 6th The 1,310-seat Century in London's Kings Cross was renamed Granada; it closed a year later. {15045}



The auditorium of the Granada Kennington being demolished in 2004. Flats have been built behind the retained façade.

- 13th *Carry On Nurse* was the last film to be shown at the 2,056-seat Granada in Kennington [London]. It was immediately converted into a bingo club. The foyer is now a Tesco Metro. {22900}
- 17th A new 1,378-seat Odeon opens in Swansea on the first floor above shops. The opening film was *The Sound of Music* in 70mm. It was recently demolished; see p29 last Bulletin. {17958}
- 18th A new 1,277-seat ABC opens in Doncaster with a 70mm print of *Doctor Zhivago*. It closed in 1992 and is still empty. {24505}
- 19th A new cinema, the Regent, opens in Dublin with 457 seats on a single floor. The opening film was *A Man For All Seasons*. The venue only lasted 18 years before closing. {52052}
- 25th The première of *Stranger in the House* is held at the Leicester Square Theatre [R]. {910}
- 25th The Gala Première of *You're a Big Boy Now* is held at the Warner Leicester Square [below]. {3778}



June



- 3rd The 1,259-seat Kings Theatre in Sutton in Ashfield [Notts] closes with *Lady and the Tramp*. Bingo commences a month later. Today the venue is a Wetherspoons pub [above]. {24493}
- 3rd The 550-seat Grand at Thame [Oxon] closes after being on part-time bingo for a while; bingo becomes full-time. Films recommenced in January 1968 but only lasted six months. {44337}
- 5th The Capitol Scarborough reopened after alterations and redecoration in the hands of Mecca. From this point films were shown once nightly, seen from seats in the circle, whilst bingo was played in the stalls afternoons and early evening. This didn't last long and it eventually became bingo only. {1840}
- 10th The former 1,706-seat Odeon in Colwyn Bay reopens as the Astra Entertainment Centre after being closed for ten years. There was a bingo club in the stalls and a 700-seat cinema in the circle; the opening film was *Doctor Zhivago*. {35192}
- 12th The Royal World Première of *You Only Live Twice* is held at the Odeon Leicester Square. {841}



- 19th The 1,711-seat Gaumont in Eltham Hill [SE London] closed with David Niven in *Happy Go Lovely*. It was converted into a bingo club, which still operates today [above]. {14991}
- 22nd The Gala Première of *Triple Cross* is held at the Warner Leicester Square [R]. {3778}
- 25th The 1,884-seat Rialto at Leytonstone [London] was renamed Granada. {40947}
- 26th The Odeon in Walsall [then in Staffs] reopened following a complete makeover. It was destroyed by fire just under four years later. {32640}
- ?? The 873-seat Picture House in Huddersfield closes to be demolished for a town centre redevelopment. {40051}
- ?? The Criterion in Gosport [Hants] was refused a bingo licence; one was eventually granted. {45030}



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 premiere photos from Kiné Weekly 1967, scanned by Ken Roe

FROM CTA BULLETIN VOLUME 1, 1967

Britain's Oldest Cinema Building Open Again

Following the closure of the Chester Music Hall Cinema by the Rank Organisation, and its subsequent conversion to a supermarket, the oldest cinema building in the country is now the Bradford Theatre Royal, which dates from 1864.

The Bradford Royal became a cinema in 1921 and the first film shown there was the Chaplin masterpiece THE IDLE CLASS in which the great Charlie appeared in the dual role of a Dandy and the baggy-pants Tramp. It was independently run by the Bradford Theatre Royal Cinema Company, of which the Berry family of printers were the principal directors. In 1965 the cinema closed for complete reconstruction and modernisation costing £30,000 in which Todd A-0 and Dimension 150 were fitted. Following a Gala opening in December 1965 with MY FAIR LADY (which ran for six months) other films of lesser calibre were shown. The cinema closed down in September 1966 when the affairs of the company were in liquidation.

After a closure of six months, the cinema opened again in February this year with the old Jolson classic THE SINGING FOOL. The new company leasing the building are Expo Twenty, who comprise Councillor Wood of Bingley; Mr. Vernon Sellwood and Mr. K.R.Eadsby. The latter two gentlemen have more than forty years experience in the cinema trade, both in management and publicity. At the time of the formation of Expo Twenty, both were in the employ of Star Cinemas Ltd. The policy at Bradford is to run the building as a contemporary cinema and screen films of outstanding merit and interest rather than compete with the big circuits.

The name of the Bradford hall has been changed to The Irving Royal in honour of its association with the great actor Sir Henry Irving who died while appearing there in 1905. It has been arranged for the film BECKET to be screened in October this year on the anniversary of Irving's death. Already the enterprising Expo Twenty have formed a late-night cavalier Film Club for members only and other innovations are planned in the future.

G. J. Mellor

For Your Diary

On April 30th, we shall visit The Ionic Theatre, Finchley Road, Golders Green (a few minutes walk from Golders Green Tube, crossing over to Finchley Road and walking up it a few yards). This cinema was opened by Pavlova in 1913, and the manager, Mr. Graham Humphries, has an interesting collection of early trade periodicals, etc.

On June 5th, there will be a meeting of the Association at the Small Cinema of the National Film Theatre. More details later.

On July 2nd, we shall visit the Brixton Astoria and, if all goes according to plan, the Brixton Granada (formerly The Empress Music Hall).

We apologise to members for having been forced to cancel the visit to the Pavilion, Hoddesdon on April 2nd.

ELECTRIC PALACE HARWICH RESTORATION

By Chris Strachan

REPAIRS AND REFURBISHMENT PROJECT



This major Project is divided into three phases: (1) Project Development, (2) Works and (3) Expansion of Activities and Audiences. The aim is to repair and refurbish one of the best examples of a post-1910 Cinematograph Act / pre-1914, small-town cinema to a high standard and which will be sympathetic to the preservation of the decorative splendour of the plaster ceiling as well as sensitive to the acoustic qualities of its barrel configuration.

The 2014 survey of the ceiling carried out at our request by the specialist firm Locker and Riley of London (who carried out work on West End theatres after the partial collapse of the Apollo theatre ceiling in December 2013) confirmed that there were areas of small movement at the interfaces between the relatively thin plasterwork and the more substantial plaster roundels and transverse fruit bands. It was emphasised that there was no immediate danger but they advised that with the areas of movement having been identified the ceiling would require to be repaired and stabilized. Everyone agreed that the only option was to plan to remedy the situation within a reasonable time scale. This would entail applying for external funding, which would be augmented with our own local appeal for additional funds so that both the safety and the decorative aspects of the building would be dealt with in a single co-ordinated project. This is a complex project that will of necessity be spread over four years – and if the two years of the investigative survey and subsequent fund-raising undertaken are included that will make it six years, which is very similar to the time it took for the initial restoration of the building from near total dereliction in 1975 to the first re-opening in 1981. What will emerge at the end of this project will be a safely repaired and attractively re-decorated auditorium and external façade. Some areas, such as that above the stage, which were added after the original building works in 1911 but which were never fully completed will be surveyed and then completed (a) to match the rest of the building and importantly (b) to maximise safety – relevant to people who use or perform on the stage and those who ‘work’ the screen as well as those who carry out regular inspections of the roof space and the heating/ventilation plant. After very useful consultations with the Heritage Lottery Fund it was also agreed to add further upgrading of facilities to the project, such as upgrading the seating and toilets.

Jonathan Blagrove, who screened his film *The Final Reel* at the CTA's 50th Anniversary Celebrations, has expressed an interest in filming the Electric Palace Repairs and Refurbishments Project.

In summary, the application for the Heritage Lottery Funding has been a very interesting and positive experience. The high listed status (Grade II*) helped considerably as did the Trust's track record since 1975; and the number of Letters of Support from near and far was not only encouraging but added considerable gravitas to the application. These included very supportive letters from the Cinema Theatre Association; the foremost Historian of UK cinemas; a well-known Architectural Historian; spokespersons of local and regional Theatrical groups; and well-known local, national and international musicians, all of whom know the building and its qualities.

The Trustees are very pleased to announce that the meetings with the Heritage Lottery Fund in Cambridge have been successful, thanks to the work of our professional negotiator Sarah Odell, Director and Charity Consultant of Spires Heritage Ltd, who has very ably made the case for the Grant and to the EP Trustees who have contributed to the joint effort.

The widespread affection felt for the building, its well-established place in UK cinema history and its ever-evolving rôle in the local community all point to this being the start of another successful project – this time with the object of ensuring the future of the Electric Palace for the rest of this Century. The whole building will then be an even greater asset to the Harwich community and the wider catchment areas from which the cinema attracts its audiences.



Following consultations with the cinema's insurers we have taken the precautionary measure of installing a safety net, which is close to the under surface of the ceiling [above] and which will remain in situ throughout Phase 1, ie the Project Development phase. This work was carried out at the end of November by Locker & Riley and feedback from customers, Trustees and visitors has been that they realise that the installation was carried out for good reasons and that visually it much is less intrusive than might have been anticipated.

The opening meeting of the Forward Planning Committee was held on 16 March. Those present included :

- Architects appointed for the Project – Shaun Soanes and Loriana Jaconelli of Nicholas Jacob Architects of Ipswich and London,
- Sarah Odell, Director Spires Heritage and our appointed Liaison Manager with the Heritage Lottery Fund,
- Allen Eyles, foremost author of books on Historic Cinemas of the UK and Editor of the Cinema Theatre Association (CTA) Annual Magazine *Picture House* (as guest),
- Richard Gray, author of *Cinemas in Britain* and Chairman of the CTA Casework Committee (as guest),
- David Looser, Chairman of Harwich Electric Palace Trust (HEPT),
- Colin Crawford, Secretary of HEPT/ Editor monthly *Prog&News*,
- Chris Strachan, first Secretary and subsequent Chairman of HEPT.

SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH OF LOCAL APPEAL

There was a full house on Sunday 26 June 2016 when Electric Palace Patron Clive Owen launched a Local Appeal for Funds to augment those resulting from Grants. Clive had very kindly arranged for the main event of the evening's entertainment to be a several-months-pre-release preview of his very enjoyable new film I.

The target for the Appeal is £60,000 and the launch got off to a flying start, raising £2,500 – including £650 from an excellent up-market raffle organised by the Café on the Pier. Since then there have been several successful ‘fund-raisers’ notably a concert by local band *Spiderz*, who kindly donated all their fees to the appeal, raising the magnificent sum of £2,200.

Many amounts from other Films, Event Cinema screenings and Concert shows as well as donations bring the total raised so far to well over £22,000. This is very good progress but there is obviously some way to go and we are pleased to know that *The Harwich & Manningtree Standard* will be supporting the campaign by publishing regular updates. More news re Grants and Appeal later this year. All being successful, work should start in spring 2018.

EVERYMAN CINEMA, MUSWELL HILL

By David Brown

It is necessary to correct the information included in the January/February 2017 Bulletin. All five screens did not open in November 2016; however, the Screen ① stalls area did reopen after extensive refurbishment and restoration of all the lighting facilities. Luxury seating and an impressive new access has been installed together with a new innovative projection facility. This was the first phase of the project, which provides an initial total of three screens including Screens ② and ③, which were the first to be refurbished with luxury seating. The additional two screen 'pods' are now being installed at the rear of Screen ①, strictly in accordance with English Heritage requirements, with completion planned for June 2017. The Screen ① front circle area will also be restored to use to provide further valuable seating and complete the overall effect.

A new bar and catering area now graces the inner foyer adjacent to Screens ① (stalls), ② and ③ entrances. The Screen ① (circle) lounge will be the access area for the new Screens ④ and ⑤ and is sched-

uled for refurbishment in due course. Everyman should be applauded for their extensive investment in this building and it is great to see the cinema entering an exciting new chapter of its life, following the depressing run-down 'UCL/Odeon blue period'. It should be mentioned that the additional two screens are vital for the continued viability of the operation and Everyman should be congratulated for their sensitive handling of the project. The accompanying photographs, taken in November 2016, clearly illustrate their commitment to the conservation of this unique building.



NEWSREEL

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

ABERDEEN

The downstairs bar at the Belmont Filmhouse closed on 28 March; the cinema remains open. The space is likely to be used as a function suite to increase revenue. {26736}

Press & Journal (Aberdeen) – 21 March

An application has been lodged to build a new seven-screen cinema with 800 seats as part of the redevelopment of the Bon Accord Centre. The £2.2m project was first approved three years ago.

Evening Express (Aberdeen) – 30 March

ALDEBURGH (Suffolk)

The Aldeburgh Cinema is to house a self-help area in the foyer to provide tourist information. It will include an interactive terminal for the public to use to access key tourist information websites. The Council closed the Tourist Information Centre last autumn.

East Anglian Daily Times – 18 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock

ALNWICK (Northumberland)

JD Wetherspoon has scrapped its plans to turn Alnwick's Corn Exchange into a pub, pulling out due to commercial reasons. However, the company says it is still keen to open in the town but no other sites are on the table at present. The 1862 building was used as a cinema in the early 20th Century.

Northumberland Gazette – 20 October; sent in by Gavin McGrath

AXBRIDGE (Somerset)

The 36-seat Roxy celebrated its tenth birthday on 10 March. The volunteer-run cinema is housed in the former Red Lion, a Georgian Coaching Inn. {49373}

Weston Mercury – 16 March

AYLESBURY (Bucks)



The original Odeon has been demolished. It opened in June 1936 and was tripled in August 1973. It closed in October 1999 when a new six-screen ABC (now Odeon) opened nearby. {24121}

Sent in by Martin Tapsell [photo]

AYR

The Gaiety Theatre has had a third of its funding cut. The operators have said there is a viable budget to the end of the 2017/18 pantomime season but they might have to close after that.

The Stage – 16 March; sent in by R David Simpson

BANBURY (Oxon)

Plans to turn the former Grand Theatre into flats have been approved by the Council, despite strong opposition from campaigners. See p18 last Bulletin. {27592}

The Stage – 23 March; sent in by R David Simpson

BARNESLEY (South Yorks)

The Council has pledged a further £70m on top of £50m already committed to a major revamp of the town centre. The Glass Works scheme is scheduled for completion in May 2020 and will include a thirteen-screen Cineworld. In 2014 Empire cinemas announced they were planning a multiplex on the roof of the Alhambra Centre; nothing further has been heard.

Yorkshire Post, Sheffield Star – 10 March; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BEESTON (Notts)

Broxtowe Borough Council is aiming to bring back a cinema to the town with a seven to eight screen "niche" cinema on the site of the former Fire Station. A cinema operator is said to be interested.

Nottingham Post – 27 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral)



The former Essoldo/Classic/Cannon in Birkenhead has just had a new lease of life. Following closure as a cinema in 1990 it became a quasar centre followed by a carpet warehouse and then a nightclub under various guises. It has remained empty for the last couple of years after it was discovered to be a very large cannabis farm, for which the owner was jailed. It went to auction last July (price not known) and recently has had a coat of paint and re-opened again in February as another night club, *Marbella Mambo*. Incidentally the old ABC / Savoy around the corner, where the 'For Sale' boards have been taken down, is now looking a pretty forlorn sight.

Sent in by Alan Hodson [photo]

Five more pages of Newsreel
in the full Bulletin

NEW PRAISE FOR CIRCUIT HISTORIES

"After being involved in the UK film industry for so long I can't quite break the habit of buying cinema books, but there are surprisingly few interesting ones appearing now... But here are a few from past and present which are worth reading [including:] ... For your inner geek may I recommend *Odeon Cinemas* by Allen Eyles, Vols 1 & 2; while it might appear these fell from Arthur Bryant's bookshelf, they are charming reminders of how these stunningly designed English cinemas were once regarded as futuristic palaces of dreams, constituting an entire artistic movement in themselves. The many photographs are particularly glorious."

[\[www.christopherfowler.co.uk/blog/2017/04/05/unusual-cinema-books\]](http://www.christopherfowler.co.uk/blog/2017/04/05/unusual-cinema-books)

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.

LETTERS

50 YEARS OF THE CTA

50 years is a long time for an Association to keep going these days but we are lucky, as members of the Cinema Theatre Association, to have two very fine publications: Picture House and The Bulletin printed most professionally for us – a great credit to all concerned. Visits and Archive also. Whether interested in the 'back street' silent cinemas or the fabulous art deco super cinemas or the digital auditoria of today, it's all there for us to enjoy and long may it do so. Congratulations.

Hugh Sykes

50 YEARS AGO DATE CORRECTION

My movie diary for 1967 states: Thurs 5 Jan, Royal World Première of *A Countess from Hong Kong* at the Carlton Theatre, Haymarket at 8:45. I was there. I got a programme (full of ads) and saw Charlie Chaplin, Sophia Loren and Marlon Brando. I've seen many stars in my life but to see Chaplin has always been the highlight of my movie life; it's a 'hairs on the back of your neck rising' moment in the life of a movie-goer. I will never forget the night. In your January list you state the date as 10th: just writing to correct it to 5 January – because I was there.

John Popey

Editor's Note: Some of the dates came from *Kine Weekly* so we may have inadvertently printed the date of publication rather than the actual date of the première. If you spot any more mistakes like this, please let us know.

FINDING THE FOUNDER

When multiplexes first burst onto the scene, I was working at a traditional High Street cinema. I remember our manager telling us that 'plexes would change forever the way we watch our movies. He claimed seats would be sumptuous, that picture and sound quality would be outstanding and that 'plexes, with their numerous screens, would offer a diversity of films that poor old two or three screen converted cinemas could not. This last claim has never really come true as Martin Tapsell highlighted in bulletin Vol 51 No 2, when he described his attempt to see *The Founder* starring the ever-intense Michael Keaton. Like Martin, I had to work hard at seeing this movie. My local multiplex, a Vue, showed little interest in screening it and I had to wait several weeks before my wife and I could finally see it on a Sunday lunchtime at our local single-screen arthouse cinema, the New Park in Chichester. Michael Keaton, as usual, was intensely captivating in a movie that was worth the admission fee. Unfortunately, the film's lack of superheroes or space aliens intent on destroying earth yet again probably explains why most 'plexes seemed reluctant to give this small budget flick a run. And that really is a shame. Cinema chains obviously want to make as much profit as possible but if they have a site with, say, ten screens would it kill them to have one exclusively for more thoughtful or quirky fare? The only multiplex I enjoy visiting (despite it being forty odd miles from me) is the recently opened ten-screen Odeon in Bournemouth. On 18 March they were showing twelve films – but seven of those films were for kids and were being screened just once before lunch. This meant that for the bulk of the day, just four films were running in the ten screens. *Beauty and the Beast*, that week's big release, was showing nineteen times during the course of the day! Demand for the film was huge but 19 times in one day! Multiplexes have revolutionised cinema-going but with a little more effort they might actually show films we really want to see.

Mike Whitcombe

VISIT REPORTS

Whilst visiting the newly-opened Curve arts centre in Slough, I noticed the promised three paving stones from the Granada Path of Fame have finally appeared in the garden there, over seven months late. The stones are Sabu, Sally Gray and Leslie Banks. They have a Perspex covering, which I hope is strong as children were jumping on them.

Whilst visiting Ealing on 31 March I noticed that a small pop-up cinema had opened on the site of the former ABC, showing a mixture of films in repertory, including *La La Land*.

R David Simpson

More letters in the full Bulletin

CINEMA BUSINESS

CINEWORLD

Cineworld plans to open 40 new multiplexes with 441 screens in a move that will create 1,000 new jobs over four years; six cinemas are expected to open in 2017. Revenue jumped 13% to nearly £800m last year with audience numbers topping 100 million. Ticket prices increased 2% last year to a UK average of £6.25. The chain also has cinemas in Poland and Israel; the average ticket price outside the UK is £3.65.

Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Daily Record, cityam – 10 March; sent in by Keith Bye, Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton

NORTH DEVON

On p27 of the last Bulletin we reported that North Devon Theatres Trust had gone into administration and that the Landmark in Ilfracombe and the Queens in Barnstaple had closed, with all future shows being cancelled. Now North Devon Council has taken back control of the two theatres and is looking to reopen them as soon as possible.

The Stage – 23 March; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

AMC BUYS NORDIC

AMC Entertainment Holdings, the world's largest movie exhibitor, has bought Stockholm-based Nordic Cinema Group for US\$ 651.9 million. Nordic had 68 theatres with 463 screens and about 68,000 seats. It will operate as a subsidiary of Odeon Cinemas, which AMC acquired last year. AMC has now hit the milestone of over 1,000 theatres and 11,000 screens across the globe.

AMC Press release – 28 March; sent in by Carl Chesworth

PICTUREHOUSE BOYCOTT

Sir Ian McKellan, Sir Patrick Stewart, Susan Sarandon and Ken Loach are among 25 actors and screenwriters who have signed a letter backing the boycott of Picturehouse Cinemas nationwide. Part of the document reads, "We find it disappointing they fail to pay your lowest paid staff the living wage." Picturehouse Cinemas replied, "For many years we have paid well above the minimum wage." Five Picturehouse cinemas in London were planning to strike on 15 April.

Eastern Daily Press – 23 March; sent in by Barry Quinton; BBC TV News – 14 April; sent in by R David Simpson

PARAMOUNT

The London Paramount resort in Kent is set to open in 2022. This is the third time the launch date has been put back. Planning permission for building on the Swancombe peninsula was expected to be applied for in 2015 but it is now likely to be this year. The Chief Executive stepped down in February days after questions were raised about one of its Chinese Investors. The £3.2bn Park hopes to rival Disneyland with more than 50 rides, a nightclub and a 2,000-seat theatre. It is estimated that 33,000 jobs will be created. Tickets are expected to cost £57 for a one-day entry.

Dartford and Swanley News Shopper – 21 February, 15 March; sent in by Reg Larkman

EVERYMAN BACK IN THE BLACK

Everyman Cinemas reported a 45% jump in sales to £29.6m last year; profits of £540,000 were declared. Box-office admissions were up 40% to 1.7 million. The group now has 20 cinemas.

Daily Telegraph – 14 March; sent in by Carl Chesworth

IMAX TO SPREAD ACROSS EUROPE

IMAX has struck a deal to more than double the number of its large screens in European cinemas run by the continent's biggest operator. AMC, which owns Odeon, among other brands, plans to create 25 new IMAX theatres over the next three years, about ten of which will be in the UK.

BBC Teletext – 11 April; sent in by Barry Quinton

IS THIS A RECORD?

The film *Man Down* starring Shia Labeouf set a box office low record at the beginning of April. In its only UK showing (at the Reel Cinema Burnley) it sold only one ticket and took just £7 over the weekend of 1/2 April.

Metro – 6 April; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Anthony Wills

More Miscellany in the full Bulletin

WILF GOES INTO BATTLE

By Wilf Watters

Just a note to correct my last article. There must be more towns and villages with more than two cinemas standing! Just look at Deal, on the Kent coast, it has four old cinemas still there, three of which could be brought back into cinema use without too much alteration.



The Seniac / Hollywood / Abbey Theatre in Battle

This time I'm looking for old cinemas in very different occupation. Starting at Battle in East Sussex, this one called the Seniac hasn't been noticed as it was a very independent concern. The front and foyer were for two hundred years the village lock-up. Then in 1936 the auditorium was added and the name changed to Hollywood Cinema then it became known as the Abbey Theatre, despite not having plays due to the very shallow screen area and it being very near the famous Norman Abbey. For years it served the village of Battle helped by the fact that British and Canadian troops were stationed in the Abbey. The cinema closed in May 1967 because the owner wanted to retire. In August 1999 it was taken over by the auctioneers Burston & Hewett and for the last few years has been opened for auctions once a month. Visiting recently I noticed that most of the seats were still there, minus



The screen end of the former Abbey Theatre Battle



Three views inside the former Abbey Theatre in Battle, now used as an auctioneers

the ashtrays originally mounted on the backs of them. Even the original carpet was in place, very worn, down to the floorboards and I think they have restored the main overhead light fitting. I was told that films were sometimes shown there but I don't believe it. The carpet is so worn and is a health hazard – goodness knows how many bugs live there. I asked an assistant if he could take me up into the projection room but he said that nobody goes up there and you have to climb a ladder outside; I looked for this but there was no ladder! Well worth a visit. Battle station is very near.



The former Bijou / Red Lantern in Herne Bay

Next we move onto Herne Bay in Kent. Here the main building is very prominent in the High Street. This was the Cinema de Luxe, opening in August 1911 then it became the Bijou Theatre in 1912. It was the Red Lantern from 1926 to closure in 1937. Today it still proudly displays the name **PICTURES** and it's open every day with furniture and collectable items on show. Inside there isn't too much to reveal its cinema origins, but it's still worth a look. Union cinemas acquired the cinema in 1936; it closed for the winter of 1937 and never opened again.

Just along the same High Street can be found a Tandoori shop. This was the Paragon and was a very early closure; in fact it closed during the First World War and the building was taken over by very many businesses. If you slide into the back gardens of the building the main auditorium can be seen. It measured 100ft by 18ft. Picture-goers in Herne Bay now have the Kavanagh cinema built into a Civic Centre. It has two screen and shows new releases.

*Thanks to my sources:
Cinema Treasures and
Martin Tapsell's books on Kent.*



The exterior and rear auditorium of the former Paragon in Deal

