

50
years

CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

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BULLETIN

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The Everyman [ex Plaza] at Oxted (Surrey), which is to become a three-screen venue – see Newsreel p27; photo taken April 2004



The new Depot cinema at Lewes (East Sussex), which we will be visiting in August – see p3; photos by Allen Eyles

FROM YOUR EDITOR

It was good to meet some of you at the AGM at the Memo in New-bridge. What a marvellous restoration they have done. Mike has done a report for us with some pictures on p20. By the time you read this, I will have met some more of you on the Brixton visit.

Because the number of pages in the Bulletin has to be a multiple of four, I had some space to spare so I have managed to fit in a lot of your holiday snaps on pages 30-31. I thought I had plenty but I must have been wrong as I have virtually exhausted my stock. If you sent me some and I haven't used them, please let me know as I may have mis-filed them. Please get snapping this summer [if we haven't had it already] and send me some more.

I have also nearly run out of articles. I have been promised another one for next time and there will be the Brixton visit report but there will still be some space that needs filling with your input. I know we all want to be out in summer and not indoors writing articles but please see what you can come up with.

Sorry I had to split the events opposite. Most of the subsequent articles are 2 or 4 pages and if I had put the remaining events on page 4, it would have meant all the following articles were not on facing pages. You will find *Dates for Your Diary* and *Non-CTA events* on p35.

We have just returned from an enjoyable three weeks in the far north of Scotland and Orkney. I photographed some cinemas I had missed on previous visits. Below are two photos me, taken at John-O-Groats, in 1985 and 2007, 32 years apart; guess which is which?

ERRATA

On p27 last Bulletin the *Light* at Sheffield opened on Good Friday, which was 14 April and not 14 March, as I mistyped. On the back page, the caption for the *Paragon* places it in Deal, whereas it is in Herne Bay. Another mistype; spotted by Martin Tapsell.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



CARTOON CORNER



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

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
SUNDAY 20 AUGUST**

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.

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

VISITS AND EVENTS

Best Of the New:

Depot Cinema at Lewes (East Sussex)

Saturday 26 August 2017: Organised by Allen Eyles
Meet outside main entrance at 12:30pm



The entrance to the Depot – additional photo on front cover

Come and see the new £8 million three-screen independent Depot cinema designed by Burrell Foley Fischer in a refreshing alternative to standard multiplex design in one of the country's most picturesque towns. A careful and thorough adaptation of what was previously a depot for local brewery Harvey's, the new Depot brings full-time cinema back to Lewes after a gap of nearly 47 years. Enjoy a drink and food at the large new café and bar, sitting outside if it is a nice day, where there is plenty of space deliberately not used for parking. We will see all three screens before the afternoon shows and enjoy a brief introduction by local group *Reel Lewes* to its hour-long, professionally edited film of reminiscences on cinema-going in the town, which will be specially shown for us circa 1-1:30pm in one of the screens. We expect to talk to the cinema's Creative Director Carmen Slijpen about this remarkable new venue. *Reel Lewes'* new book on Lewes cinemas will be available for purchase and Depot will be the subject of a major article in this year's edition of *Picture House*. There will be a mid-afternoon stroll around town to see the sites of the town's three earlier cinemas, all marked by plaques. Or you can go to Lewes Castle, Anne of Cleves house and other tourist attractions. Or stay and buy a ticket to one of the films showing at the Depot – check website: [www.lewesdepot.org]. We hope that members in East and West Sussex will take advantage of this free visit, not just to see the cinema but also to meet and socialise with other CTA members.

Getting there from London: Fastest trains are scheduled to take only one hour from London Victoria, eg Southern rail service from Victoria (10:47am), London Bridge (10:42am, change at Haywards Heath), East Croydon (11:03am) to arrive Lewes 11:47am. Earlier and later direct trains from Victoria every half hour. Depot is on the other side of Lewes station car park, just two minutes away using the side exit from the platform on which trains from London arrive. Coming by car, the cinema is in Pinwell Road with a public car park at the back of the cinema and the station car park opposite.

To the Island: an exploration of Gotland

Sunday 12 August or Monday 13 August
to Saturday 18 or Sunday 19 August 2018

Arranged by Björn Alnebo and David Trevor-Jones

And now for something completely different... Gotland is the largest of the Swedish islands, located off its Baltic coast south of Stockholm. Its capital, Visby, is a Medieval City and UNESCO world heritage site. The island is rural, a network of villages and farms with ninety-two medieval churches, all built before 1350 and still in use. And as well as natural features including the 'Raukar', which are huge stone formations forged by water and wind over millennia, there are no



The cinema at Burgsvik on Gotland

fewer than eleven operating cinemas on Gotland. None is a mighty super; each is distinctive, some are converted garages and barns, others occupy community buildings and schools and each has its unique history and charm.

As well as its remarkable cinemas Gotland has a further attraction for the cinephile. Just north of the main island is another small island called Fårö. This is where Ingmar Bergman created his film paradise. He made six films on Fårö. There is a Bergman Centre with a museum that offers a locations tour that includes a visit to his own personal preview cinema. Our own tour will include all of this. And if Bergman was not enough, the great Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky made his last film, *The Sacrifice*, on Gotland. We will include a visit to the location where the famous burning house scene was staged, a holy site for many film enthusiasts (including the CTA's Chairman)!

Members will be invited to make their own travel arrangements to Sweden. It is possible to fly to Visby from the UK via Stockholm or another Scandinavian hub but the planes are small (imagine flying to a Scottish island) and fares can be high. It might be cheaper to fly to Stockholm and to take the ferry from Nynäshamn to Visby. So we are offering two alternatives: either join the CTA group in Stockholm for a one night stay in the Elite Hotel Palace, close to the station on the new direct railway line to Nynäshamn, at either end of the tour on the nights of Sunday 12 and Saturday 18 August with the train and ferry included; or fly directly to Visby and take just the tour and accommodation on Gotland (Monday night 13 to Friday night 17 August inclusive). The 'via Stockholm' option, including hotels in Stockholm and Visby for a total of seven nights, the train and ferry, will cost around £760 sharing a double/twin room or £1,060 single. The 'Visby only' option, including the hotel in Visby for five nights, will cost around £565 sharing a double/twin room or £810 single.

There will not be an organised tour in Stockholm but we hope to include one cinema visit to the newly restored and reopened Capitol, close to our hotel, either before or after the trip to the island.

More than a year ahead of the tour the final costs are subject to the hoteliers' tariff reviews and to exchange rate fluctuations. We believe that the approximate costs given here will hold but in the first instance ask for a deposit of £100 per person. Final prices will be confirmed and payments will be due when the hotel rates are fixed, probably late this year or early in 2018.

To book a place or to enquire about admin arrangements, please contact David Trevor-Jones at [david.trevorjones@outlook.com] or by post to 47 The Street, Old Basing, Basingstoke, RG24 7BX. Those booking electronically will be given instructions on payment by card or bank transfer and will receive subsequent itinerary updates and payment demands by email. Or enclose a deposit cheque payable to The Cinema Theatre Association for £100 per person by post. Either way, please state whether opting for the 'via Stockholm' or the 'Visby only' tour, along with double/twin/single hotel room preference. Those choosing paper will be contacted by post, for which a full postal address will be required. To enquire about anything in Sweden contact Björn Alnebo [balnebo@gmail.com].

Events continue on p35...

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.
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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.
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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.
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No 40	£6.00	Tolmer Euston ; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atoy ; Stephen Waddingham – a Granada man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50 th Anniversary; Plaza Stockport; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Majestic Leeds; Pascal J Stienlet .

AND WHERE TO KEEP THOSE PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINES?

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



New Publication

Screen Stories – Lewes Goes to the Pictures

by **Ruth Thomson**. 98 pages, A5 paperback, fully illustrated. £8.99 plus postage.

Published to coincide with the opening of the new **Depot** cinema in Lewes, Sussex, this attractive book outlines the history of the two earlier cinema buildings in the town – the **Cinema de Luxe** and the **Odeon**. Their story is mainly told through reminiscences and anecdotes collected from residents and from newspaper articles. There are many fascinating illustrations, and a final chapter describes the history of the **Lewes Film Club** and **Film Society** and gives the background to the creation of the **Depot** and a look at the plans of the new cinema.



Coming Soon

50th anniversary reprints of two CTA circuit histories written by **Allen Eyles** – **ABC**, *The First Name in Entertainment* and **Gaumont British** *Cinemas*. Both titles have been out-of-print for a while and are hard to find in the second-hand market. Watch for details in the next issue...

Ordering

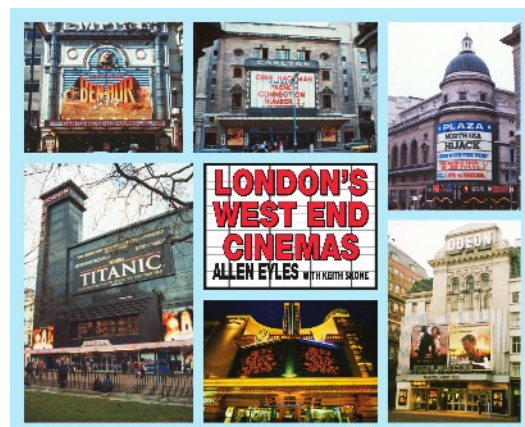
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London's West End Cinemas

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**.

CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

A Request for Members' Assistance.

Historic England has launched an initiative entitled 'Enrich The List', which aims to expand the depth of detail in listing descriptions of statutorily protected buildings. Some early designations appertaining to cinemas lack precision and omit salient features that could prove vital in preventing subsequent abuse if listed building consent is sought. Members with factual architectural knowledge, information, or photographs of their local listed cinemas are thus requested to contribute to this crucial enterprise. Full details, including guidance on varying degrees of participation, may be found at: [historicengland.org.uk/listing/enrich-the-list].

Grade II* Listed



Plans for alteration of the Granada in Woolwich reveal the intention of constructing two major extensions and additionally, as previously feared, drastically modifying the fly tower. No objection is being forwarded to the former; however, alteration of the fly tower is being strongly opposed as it would permanently preclude possible return to full entertainment usage in the future. *Photo above taken April 2015.*

Plans for conversion of the State at Grays into a Wetherspoon hostelry have been forwarded by the project's architects. These largely demonstrate respect for the integrity of the cinema, although concerns arise over the siting of ladies' lavatories in the distinguished circle foyer and the insertion of large areas of fenestration into the rear stage wall.

Renovation work to the Electric Palace in Harwich is proposed to begin in April 2018 with an ambitious target of reopening in the following October. A concession to modern comfort over authenticity is the unsurprising decision against reversion to the seating layout of 1911.



As part of a major programme of works involving an investment of £2.4m by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Hyde Park Picture House in Leeds is to have a second cinema constructed in its basement.

Photo above taken June 2005.

Grade II Listed

The architectural practice of Austin Smith Lord has submitted a listed building consent application to renovate the Forum in Liverpool as a multi-purpose venue, with a programming accent upon musical events. It is gratifying to report that this revised proposal shows a far greater respect for the character of the building than did the original: the large area of glazing previously advocated for the façade is no longer featured and the decorative plasterwork of the auditorium, including the skyscraper motifs, is to be restored.

The saga of the Ritz at Nuneaton continues, with no positive outcome currently in sight: the cinema has recently been sold to a proprietor who again appears to have little current interest in its rehabilitation. Somewhat more encouragingly, a 'Friends of the Ritz' group has been formed.

The local Council in Southport is expressing unease over the vacant Grand Casino and its conservation officer has requested that the CTA advises of potential buyers or operators. Various contacts are thus being approached.

The management of the Rio in Dalston has issued an assurance that the plan to subdivide the auditorium by creating a second screen in the balcony has been reassessed and aborted; instead only a small cinema in the basement area will be established.

Unlisted

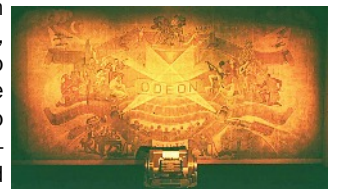
A representative of the Association spoke at a meeting of the local planning committee in Banbury against an application to redevelop the Grand. Unfortunately planning permission was subsequently granted, following which the developer immediately placed the property on the market at a price of £895,000. Paradoxically the Grand has also recently received Asset of Community Value status.

Progress is being made towards identification of a viable location for reinstallation of the frieze removed from the frontage of the Gaumont in Doncaster during its demolition. A Council planner has communicated with officials of a local museum, which may re-house the artefact, resulting in an imminent inspection to determine suitability.

The future of the Coronet in London's Elephant and Castle district appears bleak. The current management is now operating within its final year of occupation, following which, as part of a major redevelopment of the area, it is proposed to construct a new building on the site, of which the London College of Communication will take possession. A considerably smaller music venue is envisioned as part of this scheme, which may unfortunately serve to counter objection to loss of the Coronet as an amenity. The Association will, of course, object strongly, whilst simultaneously attempting to build a coalition with other specialist interest groups opposed to the demolition.

At the behest of the Hither Green Community Association, the Association's previous submission objecting to plans relating to the Park has been augmented with further exposition.

A major refurbishment of the Odeon in Leicester Square has been heralded. Reassuringly the main auditorium will be retained as a single screen and the organ therein will remain. Apprehension does arise, however, over the stated intent to install a large screen format of some genus, which engenders doubt as to the continued survival of the splendidly painted safety curtain [pictured here on 1982 CTA visit]. Regrettably only this feature and the ribbed coving area above the circle remain from the original internal décor, thereby rendering listing unattainable.



Permission to demolish the Odeon in South Hackney has been deferred. Its future employment as a community venue has been rendered unlikely following a decision to renovate the nearby Savoy in Stoke Newington for this purpose: it is improbable that the area could support two such ventures.

Planning permission has now been granted for the scheme that partially integrates Pyke's Cinematograph Theatre in Shepherd's Bush into a new development. Bizarrely, as previously reported, the rare terracotta plaque on a flank wall is to be replaced with a replica.

WELSH CASEWORK

By John Skinner

Albert Hall, Swansea



A preliminary application has been made by the developer to turn the building into student accommodation. This would mean the demolition of the auditorium and the conversion of the foyer as a reception area, retaining the facade. CTA Cymru has objected to this proposal and has been assured by the Conservation Officer for the City of Swansea that a full heritage analysis of the building will be undertaken before any formal application to redevelop is submitted. The canopy attached to the façade has been removed and the building is in a generally good condition, as Mecca installed a new roof on the building several years before they moved out in March 2007.

Palace Theatre / Cinema, Swansea



The building has been derelict since 2005, its last use being a night-club. It was opened as a Music Hall called the **Swansea Pavilion** on 24 December 1888 but operated as a cinema for most of its life between 1908 and the late 1950s. In May 2014, Swansea City Council was forced to take action in the interest of public safety and made a sum of £75,000 available for exterior repairs to the building, including making the roof watertight and the removal of damaging vegetation. The work was carried out by a company called Heritage Façades. However, there is much dry rot inside and other damage as a result of water ingress and not all of the unsightly vegetation has been satisfactorily removed. Recently, the owners, two business partners from Gravesend in Kent, have reportedly applied for Heritage Lottery Funding to redevelop the building and have appointed a firm of architects, Austin Smith Lord, to deal with their plans for the building. No application has been made to date but some form of mixed use is likely to be the end result. The City Council has carried out a feasibility study on the building but is refusing to make the recommendations public knowledge.

Castle Cinema, Swansea



Similarly to the **Albert Hall**, an application has been made to re-develop the cinema as student accommodation, retaining only the façade and rear elevation. Some retail use is included in the application, utilising the foyer and ground floor of the rear elevation. CTA Cymru has objected to both the original and revised applications to redevelop. The Conservation Officer indicated that an architectural evaluation has recently been undertaken by the Council but there has been no decision on the planning application to date. Much unauthorised alteration has been made to the foyer area and to the auditorium by the current occupier of the building, Laserzone. CTA Cymru has received an assurance by the Conservation Officer that the Council will insist on the retention and restoration of the foyer and the reinstatement of original features including the former paybox, now in storage at the rear and the staircases to the balcony, which had wrought iron handrails.

Palace Cinema, Conwy



The building has been empty and boarded up since the bingo operation ceased in early 2013. CTA Cymru visited the building in the presence of the Conservation Officer for Conwy and a representative from CADW in October 2014. The interior features were inspected and added to the listing description (at the time of the initial visit by CADW in December 2005, it was not possible to gain access to the interior). However, it has not been possible to gain access to the projection room to date to inspect the condition of the mechanism for the virtually intact Holophane lighting system in the building. It is intended to make another visit to the building with the permission of the owners, Parker Leisure Holdings of Rhyl.



Central Cinema, Porth (Rhondda Cynon Taf)



CADW listed the cinema in August 1996 “for its special interest as a well-preserved example of an inter-war cinema” although its opening date is probably circa 1916. CTA Cymru objected to an application to demolish the cinema in 2013 and wrote to CADW to express our concern over the proposal. The Council refused listed building consent to demolish and the application was withdrawn in January 2014. Most recently, the cinema was advertised as being up for sale by auction but nothing seems to have happened since and the cinema remains derelict.

Plaza, Port Talbot



The building closed as a cinema in early 1999 and was purchased by Neath Port Talbot Council in October 2009. Various applications for funding by the Council have lapsed and a new application was made in April of this year for European Funding, which is not deemed to be affected by the decision to leave the European Union. The Council is presently seeking a partner to develop the building and seem to favour the retention of the art deco façade and foyer but the demolition of the auditorium. It was originally intended to make part of the building a “cultural hub” but this is not part of the future plans, although some form of public use is intended alongside office space to generate income. The building has become very dilapidated over the years and the canopy at the front is deemed unsafe. This and repeated breaking into the building through the windows above the canopy has forced the Council to shortly put a hoarding to screen off the whole of the lower part of the façade. There is much local support for keeping the building as a public space, including by Port Talbot born actor Michael Sheen.

Note: A broadcast by Michael Sheen on the cinema was aired on BBC Radio Four at 10:30 am on Saturday 17 June.

All photos by the author

All the above cinemas are Grade II listed.

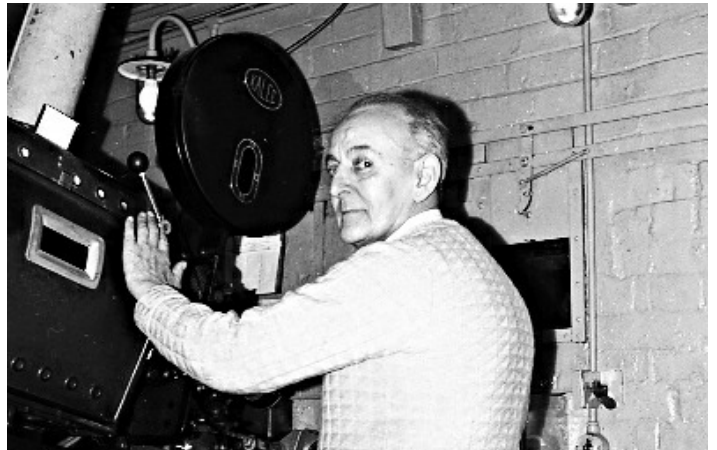
WILF GOES DOWN MEMORY LANE



This time I’m looking back to memories. Looking through some old snapshots I was pleased to see some I took back in 1962 of the Regent cinema in Amersham, Bucks. It was back in my ‘Vanishing Britain’ period when I filmed the last trolleybuses, and some local steam trains in North London. The cinema was just about to close so I wrote to the manager asking if I could come along to do some filming. “Yes” he said and I spent several days there, including the last night.

It turned out that the young manager and his wife seemed to run the whole thing. She, wearing a nice uniform, sold the tickets and later took out the ice cream tray during the adverts. The manager meanwhile was in his office ‘doing the books’. As it was the last night, locals turned out to see the cinema’s last film; it was a full house! Upstairs in the ‘box’ the sole projectionist adjusted his arc in the lamphouse ready to show the last 20 minute spool on his Kalee projector. I hope that some of these old snaps will portray the emotion of the last night.

Readers might like to know that the complete film is on the DVD *Cinemas We Loved*, available from the Sales Officer.



CINEMA NEWS – 50 YEARS AGO

When the CTA was founded in 1967...

Compiled by Harry Rigby & Ken Roe

July



- 1st The Palladium West Derby Road, Liverpool [above] closes to allow road widening. {54359}
- 1st The 1,170-seat Ritz in Potters Bar [Herts] closed with Morecambe and Wise in *That Riviera Touch*. It was demolished within a few years. {31258}
- 3rd ABC takes over the 620-seat Scala on Liverpool's Lime Street. The façade was 'modernised'. See 20 Bulletin 51/2. {32281}
- 15th The 1,516-seat Odeon in Kingston upon Thames [then in Surrey] closes with *The Great Escape*. Bingo opens two months later; that lasts exactly 20 years and the building is demolished in 1989. {21194}
- 21st The 1,294-seat Rialto at Enfield [Middlesex] is renamed Granada after being taken over by them two years previously. It only lasts until July 1971, when bingo took over. {15191}
- 22nd The 1,500-seat Mayfair/Odeon in Brick Lane, Shoreditch [London] closes with *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines*. It is sold to an independent operator and renamed Naz, reopening a week later showing Bollywood films. {15262}
- ?? The 2,190-seat Odeon in Ilford [then in Essex] closes for two weeks for 'modernisation'. {16668}
- ?? The manager of the 539-seat Cinema at Horbury [West Yorks] blames its closure on "rowdy teenagers". {47962}



The Century Pitsea in April 2009

- ?? The Century at Pitsea [Essex] introduces part-time bingo; films were to cease in 1970. {28704}
- ?? Driffield [East Yorks] voted 289 for and 102 against the Majestic Cinema opening on a Sunday. {48197}



August

- 12th The 1,420-seat Essoldo in Queensbury [North London] closes with *My Fair Lady*. It reopens for bingo two months later. {18002}
- 16th The Gala Première of *Divorce American Style* is held at the Astoria Charing Cross Road. {2499}
- 26th The ABC Pinner [Middlesex] gets the 'Luxury Lounge' treatment. See p9. {31162}
- 26th Films cease at the Buffalo in Ashington [Northumberland] and bingo takes over. The last film was *The Family Way*. {44165}



The Princess Batley in May 2004

- 26th The Princess in Batley [West Yorks] closes in favour of bingo. The last film was *The Family Way*. It is now a dance studio. {47978}
- ?? The 700-seat Palace in Cefn-Mawr [Denbigh] is destroyed by fire and subsequently demolished. {30197}

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 première photo from Kiné Weekly 1967, scanned by Ken Roe



FROM CTA BULLETIN VOLUME 1, 1967

The New A.B.C. Pinner - Cinema or Rest Home?

I suppose I went to the reopening (26.8.67) of the A.B.C. Pinner (formerly the Langhan) with some trepidation. It had been a favourite cinema in my childhood, because it seemed different to other houses - smaller than some, not flashy (unlike the Granadas and Odeons), but just a quiet, comfortable cinema, where I could see off-beat films. In those days before the demolition of the nearby ABC North Harrow (formerly the Embassy) the Langhan did not take the ABC releases, but the independent one instead - oldies, classics and continental programmes. Yes, I saw my first "foreign film" at Pinner.

As I said, I went expecting the worst - or rather, I knew what to expect. The interiors of new cinemas are all now designed in more or less the same style - curved walls at the side of the screen, covered in drapes, directing one's gaze towards the centre of this stretched, shapeless proscenium; very plain, and functional but a little unexciting, especially if all new cinemas are to be like this. And the ABC Pinner is no exception. I suppose it is all very sumptuous. After all, yards and yards of yellow floor to ceiling curtaining does create an aura of "luxury". The designers have also installed new "luxury" seating described as being more like "fireside armchairs, placed side by side at a special angle with so much leg room between the rows you could almost drive a car between them."

In fact, the stalls have been renamed a "luxury lounge area". (I apologise for overusing the word luxury but this is ABC's main public relations feature at Pinner now). And of course, you've just got to pay for that luxury. The new price is 6/6d. The dear old balcony (initially the same as before - new paint but the same old seats) is now cheaper than before - 5/-. This is where I think that "Pinner ABC creates big cinema history" by reversing the usual seat price policy.

Nothing very special heralded the reopening. The current ABC release for that week was shown, and the only added attraction was the provision of a console organ, plus performer, who gave us a medley before the programme, played us into the Pathe News at half time and played us into the foyer at the end.

No speeches, no free gifts, no celebrities. Needless to say, it was not a full house, not even for a new cinema, not even for the "Man from U.N.C.L.E." Not to worry, for I'm sure the C.T.A. applauds the reopening of this cinema, however stereotyped the design might be. At least it wasn't pulled down!

Michael Darvell

For Your Diary

The next meeting of the Association will be held in the small cinema of the National Film Theatre on Monday, September 4th at 7.30 p.m. We are honoured to have as our guest speaker the Chief Architect of Association British Cinemas. It is hoped as many members as possible will be present.

Members are asked to note that until further notice, all correspondence for the Secretary should be addressed to Mr. Marcus Eavis, 123B, Central Road, Worcester Park, Surrey

PROVINCIAL CINEMAS OF NORTHERN IRELAND

By Gavin McGrath; part 2 [...continued from last time]



The Regal Larne

The Electric Theatre in Main Street Larne opened in June 1911 with *Pals of the Range* and *Birds in their Nests*, a natural history film. It was run by Irish Electric Palaces and had a name change to the Picture House in 1927. It closed in September 1936 as the company was concentrating on building the Regal. The Regal opened on Curran Road in March 1937 and was designed by John McBride Neill with around 900 seats. An incendiary device exploded in October 1977 damaging the balcony and the roof. It closed in August 1986, after which the town was without a cinema for six years. It was reopened by Nevin Busby with four screens in November 1992 but closed for good in March 2001. In December 2008 it was badly damaged in an arson attack and later demolished. The site remains vacant. The Savoy in Lower Cross Street was opened in October 1953 by Malcolm Wilson, although it is more commonly associated with the Penney family, who took over at the end of the 1950s. Following closure at the end of May 1970 a leisure centre with disco was proposed but it is not apparent whether this ever came to be. The building was later demolished for retail. The Omniplex at Redlands, which opened in December 2010, provides today's cinemagoers in Larne with eight screens in comfortable surroundings.



The Regal Limavady

Films were shown in both St Patrick's Hall and the Town Hall in Limavady before the Regal in Catherine Street came along at the end of the 1930s. It was run by J Hunter along with the Roe for a number of years and closed in the 1980s. It reopened in September 1993 but was closed again within a year and became a bingo hall. There was also the Airfield Cinema in the town, about which little is known. Films are occasionally shown at the Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre in Main Street. The Picture House in Market Square Lisburn was built on the site of an earlier one and opened around 1932. It was designed by Robert S Hill and had 650 seats. It was later owned by Odeon Theatres (Ireland) Ltd and after closure in the 1970s became a bank. The Omniplex on Governor's Road opened in October 1997 and has a total of fourteen screens, the highest number in the group's cinemas. In Lisnaskea films were shown at St Ronan's Hall Main Street in the 1920s until the Cinema in Newbridge Road came along in the 1930s. It seems to have faded away when Paddy Clarke opened the

Astral in Upper Main Street in 1957. The first was recently home to an animal feed suppliers and the Astral became a snooker hall and shops after closure in the 1980s.



The Omniplex and the Rialto in Londonderry

One of the earliest cinemas in Londonderry was the Picture Palace in Shipquay Street, opened in a former grocery shop in 1912 by the Irish Living Picture Company. It later passed into the hands of Union and hence ABC but was later independent and still going in the early-1980s. The property is now in retail operation. Another early hall was at the junction of Hawkin Street and Fountain Street, which opened in December 1912. The Rialto in Market Street opened in 1918 and was an 800-seater. It was taken over by Union and closed in August 1959, being largely demolished for the new ABC. The Midland on Bond's Hill, on the other side of the Foyle, opened in the 1920s and was reportedly the first cinema outside Belfast to be equipped for talkies in October 1929. It was latterly operated by the Curran Group but closed in 1956 with the Kalee projectors being transferred to the Majestic at Portrush. The building was demolished and a Kingdom Hall now stands on the site. St Columb's Hall in Orchard Street was built in 1886 as a Temperance Hall and was listed in for film exhibition in the 1920s. Although probably not showing films continually in between it was still listed in the 1990s as having two screens. In December 2007 the Magic Lantern Society began showing films again starting with the Michael Moore documentary *Sicko*; however the church sold off the hall to overcome heavy debts in 2012. The main hall was refurbished and made into a banqueting centre and concert hall but no return for films as yet. In the 1930s the Opera House in Carlisle Street, which opened in August 1877, was operating as a ciné-variety theatre before being badly damaged by fire in 1940. It was demolished and the site is now a car park. Another cinema mentioned in the 1930s was the City Cinema in William Street, evidently still going in the 1950s. Billy James opened the Strand on Strand Road in January 1935. It was designed by WE Taylor with stalls and balcony and a balcony lounge, which doubled as a café and dance-floor. Taken over shortly after opening by the Curran Group it later passed to Odeon Theatres (Ireland) Ltd and was renamed Odeon. It closed in January 1975 but was reopened that December as the Strand with two screens by the McCauley Brothers. It closed for good in September 1992 and was demolished for the new Quayside Shopping Centre.

The ABC in Market Street opened in June 1960 and was designed by C Foster and A Morgan, who also designed the one in Newport, Wales. It had 1,166 seats in stalls and circle, a Compton organ and screened its first film *Carry on Constable* with Charles Hawtrey making an appearance. It went independent in 1976 under the **Rialto** name and closed in 1983. Derry Council took over and created the **Rialto Entertainment Centre** with stage shows and films, which lasted until August 2001 and in 2006 it was demolished. The **Omniplex** opened on Strand Road in November 1993 as part of the Quayside Shopping Centre and is in much the same position as its predecessor the Strand. It has seven screens with total seating of 1,362. The **Water-side Theatre** opened in the former Ebrington Centre in Glendermott Road in December 2011. Although predominantly for theatre, films are occasionally shown in the 393-seat auditorium. The **Brunswick Moviebowl** on the Pennyburn Industrial Estate opened in August 2011 created in the former Brunswick Bowl. Along with the seven-screen cinema the complex also includes tenpin bowling, Bananas Adventure Park and Martha's Vineyard restaurant. Finally it is worth mentioning that the **Nerve Centre**, a creative media arts centre in Magazine Street, also shows films in its 40-seat screen and has a Summer Cinema Programme with £2 admission.

Lurgan had the **Hippodrome** in Church Place, opened in 1913 by Sam Hewitt. It was damaged by fire in 1921 and after repair used as a variety market until the 1970s. Subsequent uses have included a toy shop and a betting shop. Upstairs was occupied by the Lurgan Theatre until 1962 with later uses including a solicitor's office. The **Grand**, a ciné-variety theatre also run by Hewitt, opened in 1914 and had 1,000 seats. In Carnegie Street was the **Picture House**, now demolished, also known as Foster's after its proprietor and in Union Street was the **Lyric**, designed by Robert Lynn. This opened around 1929 with 500 seats and was initially run by J McMurray. It was fire-bombed in 1974 when run by Solar Cinemas and the company stated that it would not reopen until The Troubles improved. It was put up for sale in November 1979. Finally we have **Centre Point Cinemas** on Portadown Road, a four-screen complex including bowling alley, opened in November 1981.



The Movie House Maghera

The Cinema in Lower Main Street Maghera opened in the early 1930s with 300 seats and was run by Supreme Cinemas. It burned down after *The Great Dictator*, a film about Hitler, was shown. The **Movie House**, the current three-screen cinema in St Lurach's Road, was opened in November 1997 and had luxury VIP seats installed in April 2016. Supreme Cinemas also had the **Picture House** in Queen Street in nearby Magherafelt. It opened in the late 1930s and was known as the **Classic** by the 1990s when it then had two screens with 220 and 100 seats. Since closure it has become **InVOLve**, a community-related social hub for the disabled and disadvantaged. Moy in County Armagh was home to the **Olympic** cinema, a 500-seater opened in 1950 and run by S Clarke. It closed in the 1970s. Films were also shown at the **Parochial Hall** in the town.

The seaside resort of Newcastle, in the shadow of the Mourne Mountains, had the **Palace** cinema, which was opened in the 1920s by Bob Cusack and Bob Barclay. Susan Murphy was the manageress and Anna Doherty played piano to accompany the silent films. It was bought by John Corkin in 1949 and closed in July 1974 following a fire-bombing. Plans to demolish and rebuild it never materialised. The **Ritz** on Central Promenade was built in 1938 behind seafront amusements by Albert McMurray, Sam Crothers and Fred Monroe. It was unable to compete with the **Palace** and closed in July 1950 with *Train to Alcatraz*. The floor was levelled for a skating rink and it was later

occupied by a casino. The **Newcastle Community Cinema** currently screens films at **St Mary's Hall** in Main Street having relocated from the **Annesley Hall** on Central Promenade.



The Savoy Newry

The City of Newry has had a fair selection of picture houses over the years. One early cinema was the **Picture Palace** set up by a Mr Pinchin in 1910, another being the **Imperial Picture Palace** in Marcus Square, which opened in 1912. Opening night consisted of three films, *Frenzy of Firewater*, an Indian drama, *The Barrier that was Burned*, a domestic drama and *Two Gun Sermon*, a Western. Presumably named after the hotel that it backed onto, it was still going in the 1940s. There was also the **Cinema de Luxe** in Canal Street. The **Frontier** cinema opened in 1915 in John Mitchell Place and was originally run by the Irish National Foresters Society, although taken over by M Curran & Son in the 1940s. It was doing bingo part-time in the 1980s before going full-time later on. It had closed completely by 2014 and was boarded-up. The **Savoy** at Merchant's Quay opened in 1935 and was run originally by the Finney Brothers. The 750-seater was bombed in 1953, allegedly for showing film of the *Queen's Coronation*. It eventually had two screens comprising 197 and 148 seats and closed in 1999. Later life saw the building operating as Cupid's nightclub but it was rebuilt in 2001 and is now Bellini's restaurant. A newer edition to the cinema scene is the **Omniplex** in the Quays Shopping Centre in Bridge Street, opened in June 1999. It has ten screens in all, one of which is a MAXX. Finally the Newry Film Club has been showing films since 2007 and currently screens at the **Sean Hollywood Arts Centre** on Bank Parade. It relies on membership subscriptions for income and generally shows films once a month.

The **Electric Theatre** in Frances Street, Newtownards was in business by 1912 and was renamed the **Palace** before being taken over by the Union circuit in 1936. It was reconstructed to the designs of R Sharpe Hill with stalls and balcony along with a brand new frontage and it reopened as the **Ritz** in May 1937. The ABC circuit acquired Union later that year and operated the cinema until closure in July 1966, after which it was converted into a shopping arcade and health club. Another early cinema was the **Picture House** in Regent Street, in business by 1914. Also in Regent Street was the **Regent**, opened on Christmas Eve 1938 and run by Solar Cinemas. It was gutted by fire in October 1977 and later demolished. **Movieland** on the Circular Road opposite the Ards Shopping Centre opened in 1992 and is a six-screen cinema. A unique feature of the foyer is the Compton 3Manual/8Rank organ from the Odeon in Hounslow, London. Finally in September 2016, the **Web Theatre** in North Street opened its 108-seat community cinema with a policy of showing only pre-1970 films. The theatre is based in what was originally a Good Templar Hall.

The **Picture House** in High Street Omagh was open by 1914 and had 600 seats on a single floor. It was known as "Millar's" and specialised in double-bills. In the spring of 1955 VistaVision was installed with CinemaScope coming that August. The first film to be shown in the format was *The Student Prince*. The cinema closed in the spring of 1961 with *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* and was converted into the Royal Arms ballroom. The **Star** Kinema in Sedan Avenue was certainly active in the 1920s and lasted until 1946 when it too was converted to a ballroom. The **County Cinema** in Market Street opened in 1940 and was run by Charles Donaghy, along with the **Picture Palace** and the **Star**. It ran shows especially for the American GIs who were stationed in the area with reports that James Cagney and James Stewart, who were serving with the US Air Force, were seen in attendance. The **Studio Cinema** on Gillygooley Road opened in October 1975 with two screens with another two added in 1991. Each of the screens at the time was decorated in a different colour and the even-num-



The IMC Omagh

bered ones were no smoking. A further three screens were added post-2000, thus bringing the total to seven, with the largest seating 305 and the smallest seating 145. It was later known as the Omagh Cinema and was owned by the Richardson family until December 2015 when it was taken over and renamed IMC. Films are also occasionally screened at the Strule Arts Centre in Town Hall Square.

The Picture House in Bridge Street Portadown opened in 1911 and was referred to as "Summerson's" after the family who originally owned it. It was later run by Irish Empire Palaces and often presented premières attended by stars of the day such as Ronald Shiner, Noel Purcell and Carole Lesley. Loyalists are reported to have run a social club here in the early days of The Troubles. It closed in May 1974 and has been in retail use for some time. The Savoy in Edward Street was a conversion of the Catch My Pal Hall, hence its nickname 'The Catch'. The hall itself was a temperance movement run by a committee and had previously screened films. The Savoy, run by Robert Spence, was badly damaged by a fire around 1960 and was later incorporated into Sprott's bacon factory. The Regal in Bridge Street opened in 1935 and had around 900 seats. The last film to be screened here was *Kidnapped* in November 1972 and it was later converted into a snooker hall. St Mary's Hall in Obins Street, which opened in December 1958, also screened films but is more famous for having Jim Reeves appear on the stage in 1963. The hall closed in the early noughties and has been derelict ever since. The Cinema in High Street Portaferry was opened in 1923 by John Knox Hinds, a conversion of his grocery business, with help from Tommy Gilmore. It had a balcony and a total of 350 seats and Maria Hinds would play piano for the silent films. Talkies were introduced in September 1931 and films went six nights a week during the war following the increase in Army and Air Force personnel in the area. Wednesdays were reserved for dancing and the hall was also used for plays by touring dramatists. Although Knox died in 1943 his family ran the cinema until 1977 and it is now occupied by the family's plumbing business.



The Playhouse Portrush

The Picture House in Main Street Portrush was really second best to the Majestic despite having been there since at least 1923. It was run by the Portrush Estate Company and had 650 seats but had closed by the mid-1960s. The Majestic, also in Main Street, opened in April 1939 with 792 seats in stalls and balcony. The architect was J Sheriff

Kennedy and the sound system Westrex Microphone, although this was replaced in the 1950s by Super Microphone. Over time it was acquired by both the Curran Group and Rank and first closed in 1970. It was reopened as the Playhouse by the Moran family in 1977, using just the circle while the stalls area housed amusements. That lasted just three years and it closed for a second time. In 1993 the late Ken Gibbons opened it up, adding a second screen of 50 seats in the rear stalls in 1997, before closing it in 2006. It reopened yet again in 2007, courtesy of the Movie House group, although this time it closed again more swiftly in May 2008. Plans to revamp the building into a bar, cinema and theatre were discussed in late-2008. It is now used by Portrush Film Theatre, a not-for-profit community-based group plus others. Films are generally screened once a month. Just a stone's throw along the coast is Portstewart, which had the Palladium cinema along the Promenade. It is said to have had 700 seats prior to the War but this had been drastically reduced to 410 by the mid-1950s and it had closed by 1963. Today the building is partly used by Roughans Coffee Shop. Randalstown had a picture house of 300 seats simply called the Cinema and run by Supreme. The New Street building was erected in 1935 and, although condemned in 1962, reopened a year later under new management. It burned down in 1969 and was later demolished.



The Alpha Rathcoole

The Alpha cinema on the Rathcoole Estate in Newtownabbey opened in 1957. Film star Sabrina along with the Earl of Antrim performed the opening ceremony on April Fools' Day. The building, which was designed by John McBride Neill, was badly damaged by fire in 1973, which meant the end for films. It later emerged as a sports and social club but was demolished in 2006.



The Aurora Rostrevor

Rostrevor at the foot of the Mourne Mountains has another tale of a small-town cinema. George Tinnelly converted an old Nissen hut at the back of his house that had previously housed an army canteen. The first film shown was *Knock on Any Door* in 1952. He replaced the hut with a new purpose-built cinema he called the Aurora and it opened in October 1958 with *April Love*. It was still going in 1983 but has since been demolished. Strabane had an early cinema called the Pallidrome on Railway Road, opened in 1913 by the Cooper family. It is believed to have closed in 1937 shortly after they opened the Commodore in Main Street. This opened in 1935 and had around 600 seats and was later run by Wilton and Barry. It was closed by a bomb in the 1970s but rebuilt in 1981 for what would become just a mere three years. It later became a bingo-hall, which is still operating today. The Pallidrome later became a shirt factory.



There were two cinemas in the town of Warrenpoint. The Garden Cinema in Queen Street was operating from the 1920s and managed by Lester Jackson, who had spent much of his life on the stage in Brighton. It was also run for a time by Wilton and Barry. The 300-seater is believed to have burned down in 1942 but one source states it was later used as a British Legion hall. The other cinema the Foy in Slieve Foy Avenue, opened after the war in 1946 and was run by HBE Cinemas (Hayward, Baillie and Ellis). It had 350 seats but not much mileage and was closed by 1956. The building is now part of the Balmoral Hotel. The Town Hall was also a venue for early films. Whitehead appears to have had just one effort called the Cinema situated on Balmoral Avenue. It was opened by Supreme Cinemas in June 1937 with 740 seats. It closed in September 1961 and reopened as the Strand Theatre a year later but closed again soon after. In 1980 the Whitehead Community Association got the go-ahead to convert the building into a community centre.

LIVE

Coming Attractions

June 29	Monday and Tuesday —	LUCK OF THE IRISH	Red River Valley
July 1	Wednesday and Thursday —	PEPPER	CRIME OF DR FORBES
2	Friday and Saturday —	RAMONA	BACK TO NATURE
3	Sunday and Monday —	UNDER TWO FLAGS	GEORGIOUS HUSBY
4	Tuesday and Wednesday —	OUR RELATIONS	
5	Thursday and Friday —	VARIETY PARADE	PHANTOM PATROL
6	Saturday and Sunday —	SHE WENT WHAT	MUSIC HALL CHAIRS

SUPREME CINEMAS,
LIMITED.

THE

CINEMA

Whitehead

PHONE 20.

* Programme *

9th July, 1937.

Prices of Admission —
6d and 1/- (Including tax).

Continuous from 6-30 p.m.

Matinee Saturday at 2 p.m.

CHILDREN HALF-PRICE.

All the above cinemas have been adequately documented but there were a number of ones that we know little about. The Valley Cinema in Mill Lane Aughnacloy, active in the 1960s, the Star in Castlewellan, damaged by a bomb in the 1970s and the Camlin in Crumlin run by RS McIlwaine, active in the 1950s. Cushendall had the Moyle Cinema on Chapel Road, presumably named after the Straits of Moyle, now a bric-a-brac shop, Hilltown had its own picture house, reportedly now a garage and there was also the Maypole in Holywood run by MW Kennedy & Co. The now-demolished Amethyst was a small cinema in Kirkcubbin, the Gorey in Mill Street, Newtownstewart closed about 1982 and then there was the Rath on School Road, Rathfriland run by HBE Cinemas. Last but not least, the Park in Stewartstown was active between 1947 and 1962 and a cinema in Tanderagee in the 1930s was run by Robert Spence.

Now we turn our attention the open-air cinema craze sweeping the country with Northern Ireland homing in on the act too. A handful of events have included Solitude Park in Banbridge that screened *Pitch Perfect* in September 2014, *Back to the Future* in September 2015 and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* in September 2016. The Slieve Gullion Courtyard at Killeary near Newry screened *The Goonies* and *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* in July 2016 and Castle Park in Newcastle played host to *Pocohontas* and *Blazing Saddles* a month later. At Portaferry, Castle Yard hosted *Devil Girl from Mars* in August 2015 and *The BFG* and *Blazing Saddles* in the two subsequent months, while at the People's Park in Portadown the crowd were treated to *Grease* in March 2016 and *Hocus Pocus* in October 2016. Portrush's Seaside Cinema on the West Strand presented *Jaws*, *The Little Mermaid* and *Splash* during August 2015 and Rostrevor's Kilbroney Forest Park screened *The Lion King* in August 2016. Finally in the Municipal Park in Warrenpoint screenings have included *The Wall* in September 2014 and *ET* in August 2016 as part of the Maiden of the Mournes Festival.

Drive-ins have also made the frame with a small selection worth mentioning. Shambles Yard in Armagh screened *Frozen*, *The Goonies* and *Grease* on an LED screen in daylight during May 2015. This followed a successful event a year earlier when *Back to the Future* was shown. Carrickfergus Castle was the setting for *Robot Overlords* and *Grease* in February 2015, while in the same month it was the Eoghan Ruadh Hurling Grounds in Dungannon hosting *Dirty Dancing*, *The Goonies* and *Pulp Fiction*. In Magherafelt, the Meadowbank Sports Arena had *Pirates of the Caribbean* on screen in November 2015 and in Newcastle a drive-in premiere was held during May 2016 when *The Bug Movie* was shown in Donard Park. The Park also screened *Ghostbusters* back in November 2012. Finally the Belfast Film Festival had a hand in showing *The Goonies* on the East Strand in Portrush during February 2015.

My thanks go to the many sources who assisted me in my research, in particular to those at the various libraries across the Province, Maura O'Loan at Ballycastle, Maria Higgins at Ballymena, Beryl Higgins at Banbridge, Chris Cassidy at Newry and Grace Quinn at Portadown. Also to Helena McManus at Carrick Times, Graham at Carrickfergus Museum, Harold Gibson from Dromore & District Local History Group, Tommy Mearns at Sandes and to those whose entries on Cinema Treasures provided useful references. Images are courtesy

of (where known), Gavin McGrath (Armagh and Londonderry Omniplex, Playhouse), David Simpson (State, Iveagh, Palace, Cookstown Ritz, Vogue, Larne and Limavady Regals, Savoy, Omagh Cinema), Kenneth Allen (Palladium, Montague, Enniskillen Ritz, Movie House), CTA (Tonic, Astor, Rialto) all used in accordance with the Creative Commons Licence, see [creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0]

OMNIPLEX CINEMAS

The chain was founded by Kevin Anderson in 1991, who started in the industry with a film distribution business in the 1940s and was constantly buying and selling cinemas all over Ireland. The biggest acquisition was the Rank Cinemas' portfolio in the 1980s. The first cinema to gain the Omniplex brand was at Santry and since then the portfolio has grown. The Andersons were formerly partners in the Ward Anderson group but the families fell out over a proposed cinema in Dublin, resulting in a long court battle. The families agreed to split their empire in January 2013 with Omniplex cinemas going to the Andersons and the IMCs to the Wards. Omniplex, now run by Paul Anderson, currently has over 25 sites and launched the OmniPark brand in 2015.

MOVIE HOUSE MOGUL

Michael McAdam, owner of Movie House Cinemas was born in August 1960 and attended Hopefield Secondary School. He worked as a trainee projectionist at the Grove showing films for the Chinese community and from there got a full-time job at Stranmillis College screening educational films for students. He later worked as a vision mixer at Ulster Television. His first venture in the movie business was at the Playhouse Portrush in 1987 where he screened one of the *Police Academy* films. The Movie House at Glengormley was the first multiplex he set up with a price tag of £500,000 but he was undaunted by this and his empire now stretches to five multiplexes across the Province. The fourteen-screen Cityside in Belfast is the Movie House with the largest number of auditoria.

JOHN MCBRIDE NEILL

Renowned cinema architect John McBride Neill was born in Belfast in 1905 and attended the Belfast Academical Institution. In the 1920s he attended architectural and building construction classes at the Belfast School of Art and won a prize in the Sir Charles Lanyon Memorial Competition for measured drawings. He became an assistant to Robert Lynn, taking on the practice after Lynn's death and seeing through a cinema that Lynn had designed in Lurgan. Much of his early work was commercial housing projects from 1929 onwards and it was not until 1933 when he designed the Apollo in Belfast that he began churning out picture houses by the number. In fact he was working on six alone during 1935. In all he designed 16 complete cinemas including the Strand in Belfast (which is his only one still open) the Tonic in Bangor, the Regal in Larne, the Ritz in Ballybofey, his only one outside Northern Ireland, the Iveagh in Banbridge and the Alpha in Newtownabbey, his last complete cinema work. Some of his other designs include the May Street Dogs Hospital, the King's Hall Ice Rink and the Willowfield Parish Church Hall, all in Belfast. He eventually gave up work aged 60 to pursue his love of travel and model aircraft and retired to Holywood in Co Down, where he lived until he died in 1974.



MEMORIES OF THE PREMIER CINEMA, ENFIELD

By Kevin Wheelan

Dedicated to Betty, who was not so fearsome after all and to John W Davies for his generosity.

The Premier Cinema, Enfield Highway, opened as a silent house on 17 January 1921 with *Wolves of the Night* starring William Farnum. It had approximately 900 seats on one level.



The Premier Enfield in March 1969

Sound came in April 1930 with the installation of a pair of Western Electric Universal Base Sound Reproducers. Painted under their bed-plates by the installing engineer are the words "TESTED OK 15.4.30", although the first talkie, *Sunny Side Up*, starring Charles Farrell and Janet Gaynor, was not shown until 26 May 1930.

The Premier was my local cinema, being just a few hundred yards from the street into which we had moved in 1949 when I was a toddler. I saw my first film, a reissue of *Dumbo*, at the Regent Cinema, Waltham Cross, at the age of four. I cannot recall my first visit to the Premier but by the age of five I was hooked on film and attending the Premier as often as my parents would let me. My father did not earn much and money was tight, so my mother made extra cash by washing dishes in a local café, the grandly-named *Cadoza*. During school holidays she would pack me off to the Premier with sixpence for admission and a penny ha'penny cheese roll from the café for my lunch. The roll was invariably hard as a rock, as was the cheese but with rationing still in force we ate what we were given.

In the 1950s children were a lot safer than they are now and from an early age I was allowed to go to the Premier on my own. Back then the usherettes kept a close eye on the audience and stood for no nonsense (more of which later), so children were pretty safe from any inappropriate attention from adults.

It is at the Premier that I first learnt the power of money. There were two queues for admission, one on either side of the entrance – one for the cheap seats near the screen and one for the more expensive seats at the back. Patrons in the queue for the better seats were always admitted first.

Sometimes, if Mum had a bit of cash to spare, she would give me shilling, which left me with an agonising decision: Should I spend the shilling on an expensive seat at the back of the cinema, or go in the sixpenny seats at the front and spend the other sixpence on ice cream? Being an avid film fan, I usually opted for the better seats.

The brickwork on both side of the cinema entrance was pockmarked with a mass of small hemispherical holes, which someone told me were the result of machine gunning by German aircraft! I soon discovered, however, that they were made by bored patrons twisting pennies in the brickwork while waiting for the cinema to open.

Whilst queuing for the first performance, I was always intrigued to see a middle-aged man, invariably dressed in a shabby raincoat, enter a door inside a small archway at the side of the building. He was, of course, the projectionist, though that would have meant little to me at the time. I yearned to go through that mysterious door and eventually did so many years later.

Not having a television at home, watching moving images was a novelty and I could not get enough of the cinema. Each visit was a thrilling experience, which is difficult to explain to a generation reared on television, DVDs and video games. I would sit in the auditorium in excited anticipation waiting for the lights to dim, closing my eyes for a few seconds to see if it was darker when I reopened them. The usual clue as to when the programme was about to start was when the

strains of Mantovani's rendition of *Charmaine* slowly faded away. I often wondered if this particular record was the only one the cinema possessed, as I cannot recall them ever playing anything else.

Being part of a very small independent chain, the Premier was unable to get the pick of the new releases, which were offered first to the cinemas in Waltham Cross and Enfield Town, which were part of larger circuits. It survived on a diet of not-so-new releases, re-releases and almost archival material. I was thus able to see a wonderful variety of films, my favourites being old Westerns, Abbott and Costello comedies and swashbucklers such as *Captain Blood*, which had been made in 1935!

Of everything I saw at the Premier, what made the greatest impression on me was a trailer for the horror double bill *Man Without a Body / Fiend Without a Face*, virtually every detail of which I can remember to this day. I doubt they should have been previewing [X] rated films during a [U] programme and, as an unsophisticated twelve year old, I found it frightening yet at the same time enticing and it is to those few minutes that I attribute my enduring love of horror and science fiction films.

I was once thrown out of the Premier. I mentioned earlier that seats were priced according to their proximity to the screen. On this particular occasion I had paid a shilling, which entitled me to sit in the adult two shilling seats near the rear of the hall, as children were admitted at half price. However, the cashier had given me a one shilling adult ticket instead of a one shilling child's ticket, so the usherette, a fearsome lady by the name of Betty, took me to the adult one shilling seats at the front. I protested but in vain. Money being in short supply in those days, I was not happy – after all I could have paid sixpence for admission and spent the other sixpence on ice cream – so once Betty was out of sight, I sneaked back to the more expensive seats. But she saw me and returned me to the cheap ones. I was having none of this and, as soon as the lights dimmed, I crept back once again. My bottom had hardly touched the seat when I was grabbed by the collar, frog-marched to the nearest exit and unceremoniously dumped outside. I then had three hours to kill, as I was not entirely sure that Mum would believe my side of the story and thought it best not to say anything.



The Premier Enfield in May 1970 with Betty cleaning the steps

Dad used to take me to church every Sunday and a highlight of my week, on alighting from the trolleybus on the way home, was to look at the stills for the next week's programme. Fifty-six years on I can vividly recall the feeling almost of despair when, one morning in April 1961, I saw a notice in one of the stills frames announcing that the cinema was closing that very week for bingo. It was like losing an old friend. On 19 April 1961 the Premier's forty year run as a cinema came to an end with the final showing of *The Left Handed Gun* and *Wind Across The Everglades*. The next day it was a bingo hall.



Three interior views of the Premier Enfield in June 1970

In 1970 my father's job moved to Basingstoke, so we upped sticks and moved to Hampshire. Before leaving I asked the manager of what was then Premier Bingo if I could take some photos as a souvenir and he kindly agreed. A cleaner let me in and I recognised her immediately. It was Betty! She was such a lovely lady, nothing like the ogress of childhood memory and we had a good laugh when I mentioned our previous encounter.

I took my camera all over the building and finally got to go through that mysterious door, which led via a steep staircase to the projection room, where I was surprised to find the projectors still in situ, though looking rather forlorn.

This was not the last time I was to see the Premier. I had been showing films on substandard gauges – 8mm, 9.5mm and 16mm – from the age of fifteen. This had taken a back seat when I married, most of my spare time being taken up with re-plumbing, rewiring and redecorating our house and a lack of funds had forced me to sell much of my film collection. By 1977 we were fairly settled and my thoughts turned once again to my hobby, only this time I wanted the real thing – 35mm – and I knew just where there was a pair of projectors lying idle. After weeks of pestering I eventually persuaded the owner of the Premier, John W Davies, to let me have the machines. Seeing my enthusiasm, he kindly gave them to me and for that I will be eternally grateful. I did have to pay £50 to Western Electric, as their Universal Base Sound Reproducers were leased to the cinema and they made this charge for cancelling the lease.

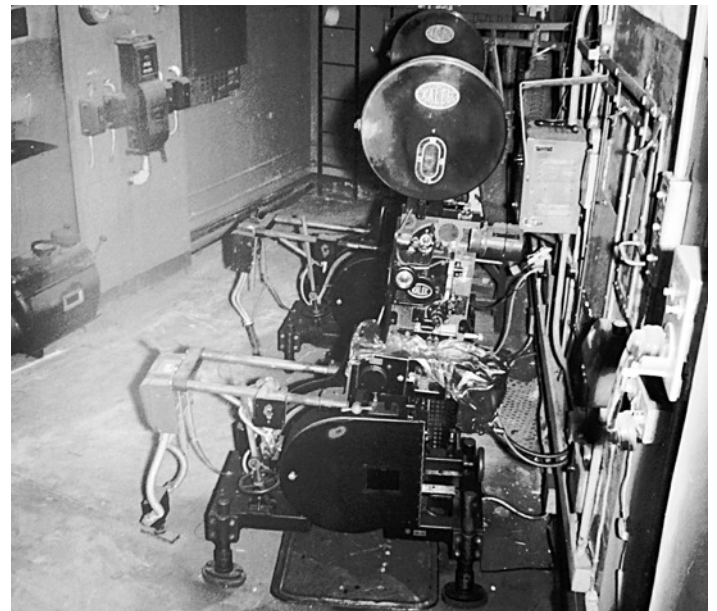


Mr John W Davies



The Premier as a cinema in July 1938

So, one morning in August 1977, I turned up at the Premier and spent the rest of the day dismantling the projectors, transporting them home the following week. They were looking even more neglected than when I had last seen them in 1970 and it was obvious that in the intervening years they had been stripped for spares, presumably for other machines in the circuit's remaining cinemas. Fortunately, I had a number of friends in the business and through them I was able to replace all missing parts, including those removed by Western Electric during their periodic upgrades of their equipment. I even managed to find a synchronous turntable used in the days when some soundtracks were on 16 inch discs synchronised with the film. This method of sound reproduction soon lost out to the rival sound-on-film system and by 1932 sound-on-disc was more or less obsolete. Western Electric then removed the turntables and almost none have survived in this country.



The projectors still in situ at the Premier Enfield in June 1970

Over the next twenty-four months I restored one of the projectors to its original condition and to full working order. It spent many years in a spare bedroom, in both my previous and current houses but now resides in my garage cinema, a mini replica of a 1930s picture house, fitted out with original seats, lights, clocks, stills and category boards and plasterwork salvaged from cinemas, which have long since succumbed to the wrecker's ball. I named my cinema the Excelsior after a much loved cinema in East London's Bethnal Green. The day it was finished, I put on a record of Mantovani's *Charmaine* and sat down in the back row to admire my handiwork. As the cascading strings filled the tiny auditorium, I was transported back to my childhood and suddenly felt the tears welling up.

Now, whenever I put on a show, I think of that little boy sitting on the other side of the projection port entranced by the images dancing on the screen. Little did he know that half a century later he would be operating the very equipment putting those images on the screen. I also think of that man in the shabby raincoat, probably long since gone to his fathers and of all those other dead hands that operated my projector over the decades and which gave so much pleasure to so many people.

The Premier was demolished in January 1985. Unfortunately, I found out well after the event, by which time there was nothing left to salvage. But I have the projectors, a comprehensive photographic record of the building and, best of all, so many happy memories.

NORTH BY NORTH-EAST (REVISITED)

A report of the CTA Visit 26-29 April 2017

By Mike Wood

The previous CTA visit to the North East and Northumberland coast organised by David Eve was the first cinema visit away from my comfort zone of London and the South East. I confess to having slipped into a clichéd smug Southerner but one that had become aware of the wonderful coast, beautiful interior, fantastic towns and cities and the wonderfully friendly people and so this trip proved it again, plus a little of the Scottish Borders added for good measure.



Work in progress at the Darlington Hippodrome [2]

Taking David's advice, most of us arrived by train at Darlington to find the coach waiting to take us to the Hippodrome & Palace / Civic Theatre (1907, Owen & Ward with Hoskins, Grade II) familiar from the previous visit as live theatre although it had been on film before closure in 1956. Now it is in an advanced stage of restoration and a bold re-working of the later additions. Divided into two groups we took it in turns for a really good hard hat tour courtesy of the project leaders and construction company.

After refreshments we bussed to the Central Hall (1846, John Middleton, Grade II) which was originally assembly rooms; later it showed early talkies and regular film programming. It has been restored and now hosts special events as part of the new multi-purpose Dolphin Centre.



Screen ① at the Odeon [ex Regal] Darlington [2]

Across town is the Regal / ABC / Cannon / MGM / Odeon (1936, Percy L Browne & Harding with WR Glenn, Unlisted) built within the original side walls of the CJ Phipps Theatre Royal. Apart from two screens tucked under the balcony in 1977 and conversion to digital utilising the original box for Screen ①, this was pure Regal/ABC in the auditorium and a visit to remember as the newly opened nine-screen Vue just the other side of town(and briefly visited) is bound to take some of the audience.



The exterior and interior of the Hippodrome Bishop Auckland [2]

With a few backward glances, we boarded the coach for Bishop Auckland and the Hippodrome / Hippodrome Picture House / Essoldo (1909, JJ Taylor, Grade II). Although on bingo since 1966, it shows its theatrical origin with a box either side of the square proscenium fronting a deep stage, the upper circle having been hidden from view by a false ceiling. After only a moment's wait for the game to finish, we were able to view the very well-kept interior.

A little way further North took us to the beautiful Beamish Hall Hotel by the museum grounds and, after settling in, we met for a welcome dinner. The hotel was originally part of the living museum attraction and is only a short walk by a back gate, where the next morning a tram was waiting to take us into 'town' where we met the project leaders for the creation of a fifties era addition, for which the Ryehope Grand Picture Palace / Grand Theatre (1914) will be reconstructed to form



Work in progress at the Roxy Leadgate [1]

a transition between the two areas. The thought and care with which Beamish carries out its restorations and that they want a local small town cinema to be included was really good to hear. After tea and biscuits we had a couple of hours to roam before meeting up for lunch and then onto the coach.

On the way to our next overnight stay, we stopped off at Leadgate for the Roxy (1938) where film ceased in the 1960s. Here, it was an honour to meet the owner Keith Barnes, who with backing from wife Karen and family is converting the cinema into a children's theatre to benefit this small community. With only recent labouring help, Keith has extended the stage, created an orchestra pit, built a new balcony, added dressing rooms and function rooms and kept the interior features where possible. We listened in awe as he quietly spoke about the project. Years of graft and no help from the Council but sheer dogged persistence puts him on my cinema hero list.

Our next overnight stop was at the Hogs Head Inn just outside Alnwick. After check-in, we re-boarded the coach for the short journey into the town and the White Swan Hotel, where we were to have dinner in the first class lounge rescued from the White Star Line's *RMS Olympic*, sister ship to the *Titanic* and *Britannic*, both lost at sea. The room was dismantled when the *Olympic* went for scrap after twenty-four years in service.

After a good breakfast, it was on the coach and heading for Scotland but not before a quick look at the Alnwick Playhouse (1926) originally with stage facilities but on film until 1982 and closure. A local group has converted the balcony into a multipurpose venue, extending it forwards incorporating the side slips and removing the original boxes; the stalls space is currently in other uses.

The journey into the Borders takes a while but the scenery skirting the Northumberland National Park and then alongside the River Tweed from Kelso to Galashiels is lovely to behold. Of course we like to spend time in the dark and the Galashiels Pavilion / Capitol / Kingsway / Playhouse (1920) was a welcome sight. There had been an earlier Pavilion cinema dating from 1911 but this went for a supermarket. The present Pavilion had opened as the Playhouse with the latest incarnation, a very nice four screen conversion, opening in 1996. This



The exterior and interior of the Playhouse Alnwick [1]



The CTA group outside the Pavilion Galashiels [2]



Screen ① at the Pavilion Galashiels [2]

is the last of a small family-run chain and two were on hand to greet us. Clearly the love of film has passed down from the father (still keeping an eye on things) and the display of projection equipment in the foyer space tweaked our interest.

Retracing our route back to Kelso, we stopped at the Ednam House Hotel and lunch in their large function room, which had been the Playhouse (1917). Little evidence remains of that use, although it carried on into the mid-1950s and maybe later. At that time it was being run jointly with the Roxy (1932) at the other end of this charming small town. This failed in 2004 and the premises is now a restaurant. Kelso no longer supports a cinema despite a recent trial run at the town's Tait Hall.



The Theatre Berwick upon Tweed [1]



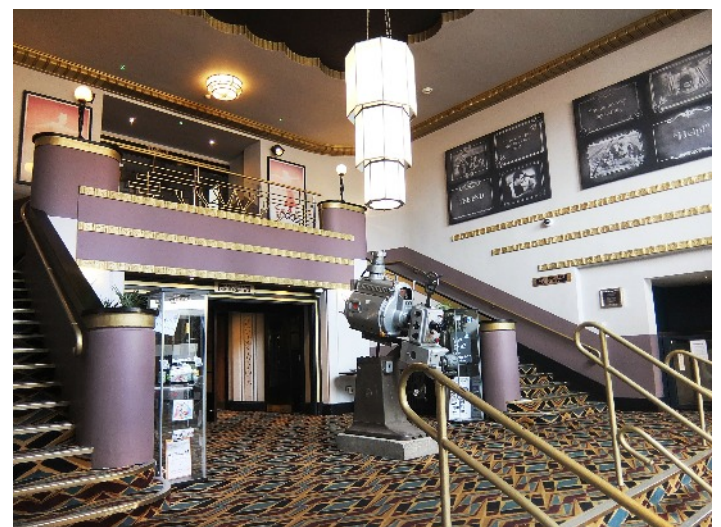
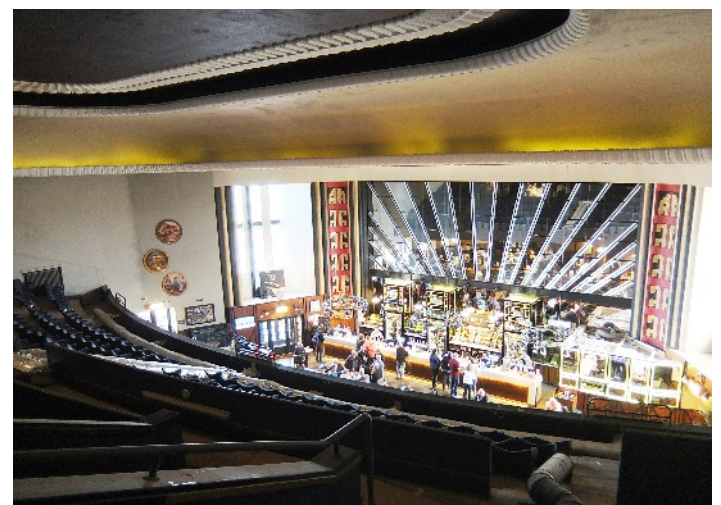
The Maltings Berwick upon Tweed [2]

High tailing it back to England, just in case CTA Scotland had spotted us in their back yard, we arrived in Berwick upon Tweed. The coach dropped us outside the handsome exterior of the Theatre (1928 Albert Schofield). This was built for theatre and film with full stage facilities and rear projection for film but went to bingo in about 1966. This then closed in 2011 and it is now a gym with little, if any, surviving interior features. When the equally handsome Playhouse (1914) closed in 2005 (demolished 2010) the Maltings (1990) arts centre began showing film in its main space and on our visit there it was good to see some film memorabilia on display.



The Pavilion Ashington [1]

Our next stop on the way down South on the A1 had us stop at Ashington for the Pavilion (1910), which looks as though it was probably built as a theatre with its deep stage and large fly tower. By 1933 it had become part of the local Wallaw chain of cinemas, as did the other four cinemas in the town around that time. The Pavilion turned to part-time bingo in 1961 and eventually full-time with Gala. There are some hints of earlier grandeur as on the façade and in the circle foyer but much will be hidden behind false ceilings and other alterations.



The interior and foyer of the Wallaw Blyth [2]



The exterior of the Wallaw Blyth [1]

All is not lost from the Wallaw name though, as the Blyth Wallaw (1937, Percy L Browne & Harding, Grade II) has been successfully revived as a Wetherspoon pub. There are some film themed pictures, a projector on guard at the entrance and the cinema seating remains in situ in the circle level. The subdivision has been stripped out and the bar inserted at the screen end. The brick exterior has been cleaned and two vertical Wallaw signs added with a discrete Wetherspoon one on the corner, so this seemed a nice place to stay for our evening meal. A quick exterior look was possible at the Roxy (1955 Lawson) a few yards across the main street and Essoldo's 187th cinema, now on Mecca bingo and then it was onto the coach for the short drive to our hotel at Blyth quayside.



The exterior and interior of the Majestic Darlington [2]

After a good breakfast and quick walk along the new waterside boardwalk, it was check-out and onto the coach for the A1M passing Newcastle and Gateshead, when a road traffic accident had caused a significant holdup, necessitating a shuffling of the schedule but Darlington Majestic / Odeon / Majestic (1932, Clayton) was expecting us. This closed on film in 1981 for snooker until 2014, when new owners

set about restoring original features inside and out and converting the stalls space for a children's play area and café, with the circle levelled forward from the cross aisle to create a performance space upstairs with a bar in the original circle lounge.

On the way back out of town, we stopped for a quick photo of the exterior of the Picture Hall / People's Palace / Scala / Essoldo (1913). This continued on film with a brief period under Essoldo control with the installation of CinemaScope and then onto bingo in 1962 and just recently, snooker & pool.



The exterior of the Globe Stockton-on-Tees [1]



Work in progress inside the Globe Stockton-on-Tees [2]

A short journey back up the road took us to Stockton-on-Tees, where at one end of the widest high street in England is the magnificent Globe (1935, Percy L Browne, Grade II). This large ciné-variety theatre replaced an earlier cinema. Film finished in 1974 to be followed by some theatrical use until bingo took over in 1977, eventually closing in 1996. Our last visit saw it empty with a problem of water ingress at the front stalls. Now this space is half-filled with scaffolding and we had top to bottom tours with the project leader and construction manager, who at that time were awaiting news of the final funding. This came in the days following our visit, so congratulations to them and another reason for us to return in a few years' time to see Beamish with its new little old cinema and Stockton with its big new events venue.

This tour lived up to our expectations for a classic CTA North event; twenty interesting venues, thoughtful itinerary, good choice of hotels, expert coaching and friendly hosts. For this we thank David Eve and Gary Trinder and the good people of the North East of England and the Scottish Borders.

Photos by [1] the author, [2] Kevin Gooding

Links for more: [www.beamish.org.uk/about/remaking-beamish]
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White_Swan_Hotel,_Alnwick]



SOUTH WALES EASTERN VALLEYS TOUR & AGM

A report of the CTA AGM and Visit 13-14 May 2017 By Mike Wood

The years roll by and for some (anyone?) the Annual General Meeting comes along, usually leavened by some events to bring in the quorum required to attend. This year, our man in CTA Cymru John Skinner put together with Ray Ritmeester a tour based in Newport South Wales and the old Eastern mining valleys, heading up towards Ebbw Vale.



The Palace Risca

Many will remember seeing the wreck of the Palace (1912, Grade II) at Risca on a previous visit and will know that the façade was retained and the ciné-variety auditorium lost. In its place there is a very nice new library, so it is still a meeting place for the townspeople and money has been spent on a library (!) but for us a little disappointing that there is no interior evidence of what went before; not even a photo. The practice of retaining the façade of a performance venue is always unsatisfactory, as the heart of such places is in the hall where we laughed and we cried together.



The CTA AGM taking place at the Newbridge Memo

Quickly back on the bus and to Newbridge for the Memo / Memorial Hall (1908, Grade II) which was built with the contributions from the local working men and which also had a rather fine 700-seat art deco cinema within it. This we saw at about the time that it featured in an episode of the BBC *Restoration* programme. It wasn't voted the winner but the feature succeeded in bringing about the funding for an actual restoration and other enabling works. This was to be our AGM venue and a useful distraction when the business lost our attention in the odd moment or two. The casework presentations got our attention but as in previous years CTA Scotland drew the short straw and Gary Painter had to zip through theirs; all that way and only five minutes of fame.

At the top of the valley is Tredegar and the Olympia of 1913, a conversion of an earlier market hall and now a busy Wetherspoon pub, where we stopped for a group evening meal. There was time to walk to the top of the street and the Queens (1910). Film finished in 1937 to be followed by roller skating, ballroom, night-club, gym and now back to a nightclub. Although it has lost much of its exterior and probably most of its interior, it is still recognisable.



The Olympia Tredegar

After a slow start on Sunday morning, it was onto the bus for further exploration of the valleys and a little to the west is the town of Blackwood. For one such that you have probably never heard of, it turns out to be a large town and the home of another of Adam Cunard's recent Picturedrome revivals, that of the Maxime (1938, William Wort & David Nye). This had gone to bingo downstairs with the circle twinned for film, which ceased in 1988 and closing on bingo in 2013. The conversion to five screens with front-of-circle Screen ① being an evocative take on cinema, tabs and all, is very satisfying. Despite the good value pricing, there is no visible compromise about this conversion and the friendly staff were getting ready for the busy first kids' show that morning.



The exterior and screen ① at the Maxime Blackwood

Of the other cinemas in Blackwood, the Capitol was a 1939 conversion of a theatre, now gone after a period on bingo and the Palace of about 1912 and is now a Wetherspoon pub but with no obvious evidence of its original purpose. However, just across the road is the Blackwood Miners Institute, which was opened in 1925 as a snooker hall, with an auditorium added in 1936 and showing occasional film, it has been recently refurbished and now concentrates on live events.



The main hall of the Metropole Abertillery

Across the valleys to Abertillery for a visit to the Metropole (1892, Charles Seabourne), which had been built for theatre, which was plain to see, with the original iron columns and galleries still evident despite later alterations and the main hall retains its Victorian character. It had gone to film by 1937, which finished in 1946, only to recommence in 1980 when the recently demolished nearby Palace (1914) went to full time bingo. The Metropole is now a multipurpose venue.

A sandwich lunch was arranged for us in a local coffee shop only a few doors from the Kickplate Gallery, which specialises in photography and our visit coincided with a display of before and after photographs of South Wales cinema buildings by John Crerar. This provided a nice interlude before we boarded the bus for Brynmawr and the Town Hall Cinema / Market Hall Cinema. Originally a market hall of 1894, it claims to be the oldest cinema in South Wales having been adapted for cinema in the early 1900s. Although recent restoration was funded by the Welsh Assembly, the operating trust had encountered problems with the local Council when trying to reopen after an asbestos scare had forced temporary closure. Luckily, as elsewhere in the area, a passionate campaign for cinema has succeeded in getting it back open again since our visit.



The exterior and main hall at the Workman's Hall Blaenavon

After a group photo at Brynmawr, it was onwards to Blaenavon for a visit to the Workman's Hall & Museum. The town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site for its industrial landscape and the hall is an impressive building dating from 1894 and built from miners' subscriptions, as were most of the others in these valley towns. The main auditorium with stalls and a balcony was too big to fill for regular film and an 80-seat cinema has been created across the corridor from the small museum.



The CTA group outside the Market Hall Cinema Brynmawr



The former Maindee Newport

After our look around, it was back on the bus for Newport and our last visit but not before we had taken a quick look at the Maindee. This is said to date from 1939 but looks later, with its stark concrete exterior and plain interior, the auditorium only being interesting for the unusual cutaway balcony front for an under-balcony projection booth. After a long period on bingo and then empty, the lobby and possibly rear stalls (?) areas have been converted for a Wetherspoon pub.

But our final visit was to the Odeon / Neon (1938, Harry Weedon & Arthur Price, Grade II) which had a successful time on film and was never subdivided. Since closure as a cinema came in 1981, there have been several uses, with the latest being Newport Entertains Our Nation, when cinema enthusiasts father and son have refurbished the foyer and tidied up the rest of the interior to operate as a music venue with plans for film, for which we should support their ambition. This signature art deco cinema building made a great ending to a good weekend with Croeso i Gymru from John Skinner and all of our friendly Welsh hosts, for which we thank you and of course to our committee stalwarts, without whom this wouldn't have been possible.

Photos by the author except group photo by Kevin Gooding.



The exterior and auditorium of the NEON [ex Odeon] Newport

[Links for more photos and description:](#)

Newport cinemas: [\[cinemawales.homestead.com/NEWPORT.html\]](http://cinemawales.homestead.com/NEWPORT.html)

Maindee: [\[tinyurl.com/y7kyf668\]](http://tinyurl.com/y7kyf668) links to [\[derelictplaces.co.uk\]](http://derelictplaces.co.uk)

ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPH OF MEMBERS



Here is a CTA group photo taken on the exterior balcony of the Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam on the "Autumn in Amsterdam" visit on 6 October 1997. Photo by Kevin Gooding. This time all participants have been identified.

Standing [L-R]: Peter Day, Vivian Vahey, Scott McCutcheon, Patricia McBride, Jeffrey MacKenzie, Jeremy Buck, John Day, Owen Cooper, Laurie Reynolds, Giles Woodforde, Robert Rimell, Tony Moss, Ken Roe, Richard Norman, Patricia Levy, Keith Addison, John Benzing, Sally McGrath, Allen Eyles, Jo Simmonds, Malcolm Davis, Davina Reynolds, Ray Parry, Eileen Killey.

Kneeling [L-R]: Mike Speed, David Simpson, Rachel Woodforde, David Trevor-Jones, Adam Unger.

WARTIME CONCERTS IN CINEMAS

By David A Ellis

During WWII cinemas and theatres across the UK did their bit for the war effort. There were many charity concerts staged, with some of the big stars of the day. In Chester, several Sunday concerts were held. On 17 December 1939 famous London stars took to the Regal stage. Proceeds were used to provide Christmas gifts and comforts for men of the National Defence Corps, serving in the area. A Lea Seidl [1895-1987] a celebrated actress and opera singer of the *White Horse Inn* fame topped the bill. She first appeared in the production at the London Coliseum in 1931.

REGAL CINEMA, CHESTER
SUNDAY CONCERT
MARCH 3rd, 1940, at 7-30 p.m.
 Doors open 6-30 p.m.
 Artistes will include:—
Essie Ackland, Tessie O'Shea,
Reginald Morpew, Jack Train.
 Proceeds for Cheshire Regt. and R.A.S.C. Comforts' Funds.
ADMISSION BY TICKET ONLY, obtainable from Regal Cinema—Reserved 3s. 6d., Unreserved 2s. 6d., 1s. 6d., and 1s. 0d.
Get your Ticket immediately and make sure of a Seat! 317

In 1940 the famous Liverpool comedian Robb Wilton [1881-1957] appeared at the ABC Regal. This was in aid of the British Red Cross Society and the St John's Ambulance Brigade Joint War Organisation. On 3 March 1940, the Regal played host to stars of the day Tessie O'Shea [1913-1995] and Jack Train [1902-1966]. Tessie was born in Cardiff and played the banjulele. She capitalised on her size by adopting the song *Two Ton Tessie from Tennessee*, which became her theme tune. Jack Train was in the BBC radio show *It's That Man Again* (ITMA) and appeared in a few films. Proceeds from the show went to the Cheshire Regiment and RASC Comforts' Fund. There was a turn by two Chester boys, a Richard Bullock and Jimmy Parry, I wonder if they are still around.



The ABC (Regal) Chester in 1971 – photo courtesy Dusashenka

In 1941 the Western Command Army Entertainments Officer organised what was called a super concert at the Chester Odeon. This took place on Sunday 9 March. It was referred to as one of "The Good Neighbour" efforts, organised by the Western Command, which was based in Queens Park, Chester. The profits from the show were devoted to the Stage and Variety Artists' charitable institutions. The show was a thank you from the army for the splendid work that was done for the troops by the theatrical profession. A first class programme was ar-

ranged and on the bill were radio favourites of the time Elsie [1893-1990] and Doris [1900-1978] Waters, known as Gert and Daisy.

GAUMONT, CHESTER
GRAND CHARITY CONCERT
 IN AID OF
 The Depot for KNITTED GARMENTS for the ROYAL NAVY
SUNDAY, JANUARY 21st, 1940
 At 8.0 p.m. Doors open at 7.30 p.m.
JACK McCORMICK and his Broadcasting Band

DON'T LET THE BLACK-OUT WORRY YOU!	MISS EDITH FLETT WILFRED LEWIS GEORGE YOUNG W. TAPLEN ROWLEY ERNEST BANCROFT ACCOMPANIST HAROLD THIEMS AT THE ORGAN Etc., Etc., Etc.	IT WILL BE NEARLY FULL MOON!
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PRICES OF ADMISSION: 2/6, 2/-, 1/6, 1/-.
 Tickets obtainable at
 GAUMONT, MUSIC HALL and MAJESTIC, CHESTER.

Jack McCormick and his broadcasting band appeared at the Gaumont on 21 January 1940. A Mr Harold Thiems provided the organ music from the mighty Compton. This was in aid of The Depot for Knitted Garments for the Royal Navy. Another Gaumont show was staged on 26 January 1941 in aid of soldiers, sailors and the Air Force Dependents Association of the local committee, for which a Lady Gordon Finlayson was president. Among others was the comedian Wee Georgie Wood [1894-1979]. He related to the full house his days as a Music Hall star. There was a thunderous opening to the show by a military band.

At the Tivoli theatre in Buckley a Grand Concert was held on 4 June 1944. It was Salute the Soldier Week. It was billed as a Great Programme for a Great Cause.

GRAND CINEMA, FRODSHAM
 TELEPHONE 2100.
 A GREAT PERFORMANCE FOR A GREAT CAUSE
SUNDAY, JUNE 11th, at 7-30 p.m.
GRAND CONCERT
 by the
ROYAL ARTILLERY (PORTSMOUTH) BAND
 Total Proceeds to be given to the
 Royal Artillery Benevolent Fund.
BE WISE BOOK EARLY

PRICES:
 Balcony 3/- Rear Stalls 2/3 Stalls 1/6
 BOOK GRAND CINEMA FROM 5-30 P.M. EACH EVENING

In Frodsham, Cheshire the Grand Cinema, Church Street staged a concert on Sunday 11 June 1944 by the Royal Artillery (Portsmouth) Band. The proceeds were given to the Royal Artillery Benevolent Fund.

The Odeon staged a show in aid of the prisoners of war on 21 November 1943. Apart from helping the nation to forget their worries for a few hours by taking them into a world of make believe, the cinemas and theatres also strived to help the people who gave their all to allow us to keep our freedom.



NEWSREEL

The items in this section are taken mainly from press cuttings from local newspapers; there may be minor errors in reporting dates or other detail.

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

It is understood that Light Cinemas is in negotiations to operate an 800-seat seven-screen complex earmarked for the Bon Accord Centre. It will occupy the centre's empty bowling alley.

Evening Express (Aberdeen) – 5 May

AMBLESIDE (Cumbria)

The vegetarian restaurants at Zeffirellis and Fellinis cinemas have won four top awards for food and hospitality.

Westmorland Gazette – 21 February; sent in by Terry Hanstock

ASHFORD (Kent)

Construction has started on the town centre development at Eldwick Place, which will incorporate an eight-screen Picturehouse cinema. No opening date has been given.

Kentish Express – 4, 11 May

BASILDON (Essex)

A "major cinema chain" is in discussions with the Council to open a cinema in East Square.

Basildon Yellow Advertiser – 1 June

BEDFORD

The new seven-screen Vue at Riverside is due to open in July. There will be over 900 seats. The town already has a six-screen Cineworld.

Bedfordshire on Sunday – 7 May

BELFAST

Planning permission has been granted for an office development to replace the Movie House on Dublin Road. The report does not mention any possible cinemas in the new building. See p23 Bulletin 51/1.

Belfast Telegraph – 17 May

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral)

A mysterious fire was discovered in the former Savoy/ABC cinema on Argyll Street about 6pm on Bank Holiday Monday 29 May. The cause of the fire is unknown but is being investigated jointly with the local police. The building is in a poor state of repair and due to be demolished. {32707}

The Town Hall in Hamilton Square is the last venue in the town where film can be shown. It is one of the few Town Halls that can boast its own cinema. At one time it was used as the Wirral Museum and the cinema was part of the exhibits, using the Assembly Hall. The projection equipment was supplied and maintained by the Projected Picture Trust [PPT].

Sent in by Mike Taylor

BLACKBURN (Lancs)

An eight-screen Reel cinema is to be built on the former Waves water fun centre. Two screens will show Bollywood films. Blackburn already has a ten-screen Vue.

Lancashire Telegraph – 3 May

BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)



More than two years after it was first announced that the Picturedrome Bognor Regis, would get a fourth screen, work will finally begin to make it a reality. Permission for construction to finally begin on the

114-seat auditorium at the Council-owned cinema, that is run by Adam Cunard's Electric Theatre Company, finally got the go ahead at the third attempt on the last Monday of April 2017. Work was meant to start in 2015 but an access dispute with a local resident along with the election of new councillors, who opposed Council money being used as a loan to fund the work, prevented building from starting. Uncertainty over whether the new screen would be realised grew as time wore on. As 2017 dawned it was even feared that permission for the new auditorium, which will be housed in a single-storey extension on land that is currently the cinema car park, could be withdrawn as costs began to spiral. But on 24 April 2017 Bognor Town councillors agreed by nine votes to one to extend the original £850,000 loan to £965,823 to allow work to begin. A round of applause broke out in the council chamber when the outcome of the vote was announced with Town Mayor Pat Dillon saying: "I think you have made the right decision." That decision was in the balance from as early as May 2015 when newly elected councillors opposed the original loan that had been approved just two months before and which was to be paid back over a twenty-five year term. By the end of the year, though, local residents had expressed support for the loan so the Council held another vote to approve it. Work should then have started but before it could, the owner of a property adjoining the cinema refused to allow the builder's crane to swing over his land. This resulted in Cheesemur Building Contractors having to devise an alternative method of constructing the new screen. Not surprisingly, this involved extra costs. To authorise the additional six figure sum now needed the Town Council needed to meet, discuss and approve the loan for a third time. Construction will now begin on 26 June. To accommodate the work, the Picturedrome will not open until 4pm on weekdays. During the summer holidays the cinema will open around 1pm as opposed to 11am. Weekend opening times will not be affected. Picturedrome management are delighted that a fourth screen will now become a reality and they are expecting it to be open for business in spring 2018. {14782}

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe; Bognor Regis Post – 28 April, 12 May

BRADFORD (West Yorks)



The Youth Centre in the former Plaza closed last September and the building is currently vacant. It opened as the Cross Lane Picture House in September 1914 and films ceased in March 1963. Bingo took over but closed in 2010 when the venue was converted into the Joshua Project. The CTA visited in August 2011, when the above picture was taken. {32800}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken August 2011

BRIGHTON (West Sussex)

The Odeon will have to spend £1,500 to repair an automatic ticket machine after a man smashed the screen. On his way out of the cinema, he pushed a fire exit door open so hard that he broke the hinges. Police are appealing for any witnesses.

The Argus (Brighton) – 12 May; sent in by Barry Quinton

The grade II listed former Astoria was expected to be sold again in June. Bids in excess of £7.5m have been received; the previous owners would make £2m profit after only two years. It will probably make way for student accommodation. The cinema opened in 1933 with 1,823 seats; films ceased in 1977 and bingo took over. This closed in 1996 and the building has been largely unused since. {1844}

Argus (Brighton) – 30 May

BRYNMAWR (Blaenau Gwent)

The Market Hall Cinema reopened in May after being declared free of asbestos. It was forced to close last November when the substance was discovered during building work for a second screen. The CTA visited in May – see p21. {26576}

Gwent Gazette – 20 April, 1 June

BURNLEY (Lancs)

By the time you read this, work should be almost complete on the revamp of the nine-screen Reel cinema. It includes redevelopment of the foyer, new seating, new auditorium sidelights, a complete refitting of the toilets and new carpets and flooring throughout.

Burney Express – 16 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

CAMBRIDGE

The nine-screen Light [ex Cineworld] is installing a digital IMAX screen. It was due to open on 21 July with *Dunkirk*. {24296}

Cambridge News – 18 May

CHESTER



The new £37m Storyhouse opened on 10 May. A new 800-seat theatre has been built adjacent to the former Odeon, which itself has been gutted to house a library and a 100-seat boutique cinema in a pod at roughly circle level. Access to the new theatre is via red staircases through the proscenium of the Odeon. [www.storyhouse.com]

The Observer – 7 May [tinyurl.com/k49tzgv]; Chester & District Standard – 11 May; sent in by Ivan Harris; photo by David A Ellis

CHESTERFIELD (Derbys)



The Winding Wheel has held an exhibition to celebrate its 30th anniversary. The building opened as the Picture House in September 1923 and was enlarged in 1930. It was taken over by Odeon, being so renamed in 1937. Films ceased in 1981. The exhibition included memorabilia from the cinema days and the last projector used in 1981, stored in Chesterfield museum. {22413}

Derbyshire Times – 11 May; photo taken September 2006

CHICHESTER (West Sussex)

Roger Gibson, artistic consultant of the New Park cinema and director of its annual International Film Festival, was recognised at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival. He was honoured by being named as one of four jury members of the Europa Cinema Label during the 49th Directors' Fortnight.

Bognor Regis Post – May 2017; sent in by Mike Whitcombe

CHIPPENHAM (Wilts)



The Astoria [Reel] is to expand from two to five screens by converting the disused stalls area, once occupied by a bingo club. The existing screens in the former circle would also be modernised. The scheme was first mooted in 2011 but postponed. If plans are approved, completion is scheduled for October. The building first opened in May 1939. {24537}

Gazette & Herald – 4 May; photo taken March 2006

CHORLEY (Lancs)

Artist's impressions have been released of the new six-screen cinema to be built as part of the town centre redevelopment. It will be operated by Reel Cinemas and is due to open in late 2018.

Chorley Citizen – 10 May

CIRENCESTER (Glos)

Plans for a cinema in the town might not be dead, despite Everyman pulling out of the Brewery Court project last year. The developer is once again in talks with the Council.

Wilts & Glos Standard – 20 April

COOKSTOWN (Co Tyrone, Northern Ireland)

The contractor responsible for the recent refurbishment of the five-screen Ritz was named "Highly Commended" in the recent Northern Ireland Master Building Awards. {26710}

Tyrone Courier – 3 May

DEAL (Kent)

Work has begun to create a 3,000-seat open air theatre and cinema on the site of the former Betteshanger Colliery. It is due to open next year. [www.betteshanger-parks.co.uk]

Thanet Gazette – 14 April; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

DERBY

£8.6m has been allocated by the Council for a 5,000 capacity performance venue to replace the Assembly Rooms, which was damaged by fire in March 2014 and subsequently demolished.

Derby Telegraph – 15 June; sent in by Christopher Smith

DORCHESTER (Dorset)

Spencer Clark is the new manager of the Plaza Cinema, run by the Electric Theatre Company. He was formerly the manager of the ABC Bournemouth, which sadly closed in January 2017.

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe

DURHAM

Plans to develop the Gala Theatre have been put on hold "indefinitely". The Council owners will wait to assess competition from a six-screen Odeon, which is currently being built and a promised three-screen Everyman. See p15 Bulletin 50/4. {24672}

Northern Echo – 19 May

ELY (CAMBS)

The new six-screen Cineworld opened on 12 May. {55778}

Ely Standard – 18 May; sent in by Carl Chesworth

FORDINGBRIDGE (Hants)

The former Regal has been transformed into a 30-seat cinema and eight flats. The cinema reopened at the end of May with a screening of *Casablanca*. An old 35mm projector is on display, loaned by the Regent Church. {37771}

Southern Daily Echo, New Forest Post – 27 April; sent in by Ian Patterson & Philip Stevens

GARSTANG (Lancs)

Building work has begun on a leisure complex at Barton Grange Garden Centre at Brock. Named 'The Flower Bowl', it will include a three-screen cinema, a bowling alley, ice rink, indoor crazy golf and restaurants. Opening is set for spring 2018.

Lancashire Evening Post – 20 May

GOSPORT (Hants)

A community cinema called the Ritz will be screening films once a fortnight at St Vincent's College. The last cinema in the town, the Ritz, closed in 1999.

Daily Echo – 20 May; sent in by Ian Patterson

GREAT YARMOUTH (Norfolk)

Plans – announced on p24 of the last Bulletin – to upgrade the Hollywood cinema have been approved.

Great Yarmouth Mercury – 26 May

HAVERFORDWEST (Pembroke)

Plans for a five-screen cinema on the Slade Lane site, possibly to be operated by Premier Cinemas, have been withdrawn. Plans for another multiplex at the former Wilko site have still to be decided upon.

Western Telegraph – 7 June

INVERNESS (Highland)

It has been confirmed that plans to build an eight-screen cinema as part of the redevelopment of the Eastgate Centre are still under consideration.

Inverness Courier – 16 May

KEIGHLEY (West Yorks)

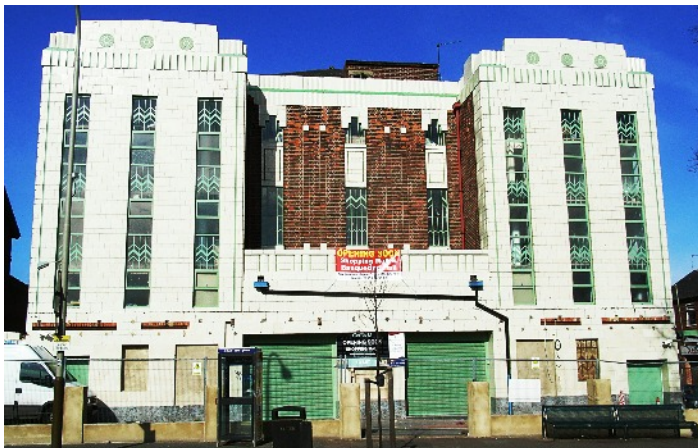
Plans for a nine-screen Cineworld at a proposed shopping centre have been abandoned. Following the news, the existing two-screen Picture House announced a wave of improvements, including new seats.

Keighley News, Telegraph & Argus – 8, 15 June; sent in by Keith Taylorson

LEICESTER

Plans are underway to resurrect the Haymarket Theatre after a decade of closure. The venue opened in 1973 and closed in 2007 when the new Curve opened.

The Stage – 27 April; sent in by R David Simpson



The Colloseum [sic] Banqueting Hall on Melton Road has closed and the building is For Sale. It opened as the New Coliseum cinema with 1,552 seats in November 1933, replacing the old Coliseum a block away. Films ceased in 1968 and bingo took over. In the late 1990s it began screening Bollywood films and was converted into a three-screen cinema, known as the Capital. It closed in February 2002 and the building lay unused until it was converted into the banqueting hall in 2007. {33765}

Leicester Mercury – 23 June [tinyurl.com/y8brarko]; photo taken April 2007

LEWES (East Sussex)

Actor Martin Freeman officially opened the new Depot cinema on 25 May. It is housed in the former Harvey's Depot warehouse, adjacent to the railway station. The CTA will visit on 26 August – see p3. [www.lewesdepot.org]

Sussex Express – 19 May

LIVERPOOL (Central)

A three-screen digital cinema is to be included in part of the revamped Metro Quarter building. For many years this building in the Whitechapel area was the main Post Office for Liverpool.

Sent in by Mike Taylor

The 56-seat Small Cinema on Victoria Street has closed due to the building in which it is housed, a former magistrates' court, being put up for sale. Since it opened in March 2015 it has held over 270 screenings and attracted close to 10,000 cinema-goers. {52474}

Liverpool Echo – 22 April; sent in by David Simpson & Mike Taylor

LIVERPOOL (Kirkby)

Reel is to be the operator of a six-screen cinema on the former library site. If permission is granted, opening is set for 2018.

North West Place – 22 April; sent in by Carl Chesworth

LIVERPOOL (Speke)

The steelwork is being erected for the eight-screen Cineworld, due to open in spring 2018. This replaces the company's former cinema in Edge Lane. The new complex could threaten the Woolton Picture House just over a mile away.

Sent in by Mike Taylor

LONDON (Croydon)

The Fairfield Halls is undergoing a £30m transformation, due to open in 2018. The new operators are to be BH Live, who run the Pavilion Theatre in Bournemouth, although most of its 15-strong portfolio is made up of sport and leisure centres. It is understood they were the only bidder.

The Stage – 27 April, 11 May; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

LONDON (Dalston)

A crowdfunding bid for £150,000 has been launched to upgrade the façade of the grade II listed Rio and build a 34-seat second screen in the basement.

Hackney Gazette – 15 June

LONDON (Ealing)

An exhibition on the new Filmworks development was held on 20 May. There is due to be an eight-screen Picturehouse cinema with 1,045 seats. The developers have submitted minor amendment to the Council to refine the planning application. Preparatory work commenced at the site last December.

This is Local London – 15 June; sent in by R David Simpson

LONDON (Hackney Road)

Permission has been granted to demolish the former Odeon. Residents campaigning to save the building are "gutted" at the decision. It opened in July 1938 with 1,926 seats. Films ceased in May 1961 and bingo took over. That closed in June 2015 when the owners terminated the lease early. Flats will probably be built on the site. {13886}

Evening Standard – 7 June; *Hackney Gazette* – 8 June; sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Kensington)

An Open Air Cinema presented by Westfield was one of the attractions at the London Evening Standard's Night Market.

London Evening Standard – 6 June; sent in by Gavin McGrath

LONDON (Kilburn)

The Tricycle Theatre has received £1m from Brent Council towards a £5.5m refurbishment. The capacity will be increased from 232 to 292 seats and is due to reopen in spring 2018. The report does not mention the adjacent Tricycle Cinema.

The Stage – 15 June; sent in by R David Simpson

LONDON (Kings Cross)

I think this one must have slipped through the net. A small Everyman on the Corner cinema opened in July last year in the new development north of Kings Cross station. It was initially advertised with 32 seats but four are on moveable sofas and now usually reserved for staff use, so there are 28 public seats. Projection is Sony 4k digital with Dolby AES sound. A three-screen Everyman is to be built nearby and it is not clear if this small cinema will close or continue as a fourth screen. {54718}

Sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Southwark)

Backyard Cinema has opened an immersive cinema at Mercano Metropolitan and is to become the project's permanent home. There will be seasonal transformations at the venue as deemed necessary.

Time Out – 13 June; sent in by Gavin McGrath

LOWESTOFT (Suffolk)

The three-screen **East Coast** cinema [ex Hollywood] has introduced a new off-peak pricing scheme. Early bird tickets will be £4.40.

Lowestoft Journal – 16 June

MANCHESTER (Central)

Odeon has revealed plans to rebrand the sixteen-screen **AMC Great Northern Warehouse**. Bosses say they are in talks with AMC, who bought Odeon last year, following the sale of its Printworks site to Vue – see p26 last Bulletin. Odeon Unlimited movie passes can now be used at the AMC. The rebranded Vue at the Printworks opened on 24 May. {25057}

Manchester Evening News – 21, 27 April, 13 May, 15 June;
sent in by Carl Chesworth, Richard Lyons & Nick Taylor

Plans have been unveiled to transform a disused fire station on London Road include a cinema. The historic building has stood empty since it was vacated over 30 years ago. Planning permission to convert it into a hotel was granted but not acted upon.

Manchester Evening News – 11 May; sent in by Carl Chesworth



Demolition of the former Paramount / Odeon has slowed down – We have been told that [unspecified] problems have been encountered.

Sent in by Christopher Kearney [photo], Norman Pemberton & Nick Taylor

MARGATE (Kent)

The Theatre Royal is hosting a paranormal night on 12 August; tickets are £35. Originally built in 1787 it is reputed to be the most haunted theatre in the country. Paranormal activity is said to be more concentrated around a trapdoor that leads to what was once a smugglers cave. Ghostly goings-on have been reported on stage and backstage and in one of the boxes, where a man jumped to his death during a performance.

Thanet Gazette – 21 April; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

MONTROSE (Angus)

The project to build a cinema on the site of the former swimming pool has reached the final stage of Jewson's [builders' merchants] Helping Build Better Communities competition. The team invited people to cast their votes and an awards day was due to be held on 5 July.

Dundee Courier – 30 May; *Evening Telegraph (Dundee)* – 3 June

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NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Work has recommenced on the demolition of the former **Paramount/Odeon**, which was halted in April when part of the scaffolding collapsed. See p26 last Bulletin and p23 Bulletin 51/2. {3307}

The Journal (Newcastle) – 29 April

OSWESTRY (Shropshire)

Trevor Harris is working with a company wanting to convert an [unnamed] town centre property into a single-screen cinema. The owner of the 70-seat **Kinoculture**, which already operates in the town, has said there is room for another.

Shropshire Star – 17, 18 May; sent in by John Powell

OXTED (Surrey)

The **Everyman** [ex Plaza] is to add two more screens. The venue will be closed for about two months to enable the work to be carried out but it is not known how the screens will be fitted in. The bar will also be enlarged. The outside of the building will see little change. {25231}

Surrey Mirror – 15 June; sent in by Tim McCullen & Martin Tapsell;
photo on front cover

PERTH

Permission has been granted for the **Mill Quarter** development, which will include a multiplex cinema. The target opening is spring 2019.

Perthshire Advertiser, Dundee Courier – 21 April

PETERBOROUGH (Cams)



Two local entrepreneurs have launched a bid to take over the **Broadway** [ex Odeon] and hope to reopen it in September. Apart from two short seasons, it has been dark since it closed in 2011 when the then manager led the venue into financial difficulty; he was jailed for fraud in 2014. {19950}

The Stage – 1 June; sent in by R David Simpson; photo taken May 2004

PLYMOUTH



The former **Belgrave** is up For Sale with offers in the region of £750,000. Permission was granted last year to demolish it and build student flats. It opened in 1912 with 457 seats. It was enlarged when sound was installed in 1930. Films ceased in April 1983 and it became a snooker club, which closed in 2015. {50831}

Plymouth Herald – 16 May [tinyurl.com/ycrb2nd7]; photo taken June 2008

PORTSMOUTH

The former Odeon, closed since January 2008, became a talking point in the recent General Election. A planning application to demolish the auditorium and to build 15 one to four bedroom houses with 23 car parking spaces was welcomed by Portsmouth North Conservative MP Penny Mordaunt, who claimed the residents would increase footfall in the local High Street. Rupal Kahn, the Labour candidate, countered by stating the application didn't contain enough affordable homes. Mordaunt retained her seat with a decreased majority while Kahn increased the Labour vote by over 5,000. HRP Architects who are designing the development on behalf of Amercourt Ltd are currently redrawing their designs after the Council urged them to make the scheme more modern. {22368}

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe

PRESTON (Lancs)

Work has started on a major improvement to the seven-screen Vue at the Capitol Centre, Walton-le-Dale. This will be the first upgrade since it opened 25 years ago. Two years ago it was threatened with demolition when a major retailer planned to open up at the Centre. A new entrance will be built and the interior will be modernised. See p21 Bulletin 49/2. {25252}

Lancashire Evening Post - 27 May

REDHILL (Surrey)

Residents have reacted angrily at the Council's decision to demolish the façade of the former Odeon and build flats. The auditorium has already been demolished, leaving the façade shored-up.

Surry Mirror - 25 May

RINGWOOD (Hants)

Actor Christopher Biggins has backed the campaign to restore the former Regal. {28134}

New Milton Advertiser - 2 June; sent in by Philip Stevens

RIPON (North Yorks)



The florist occupying the shop at the front of the former Palladium was served notice and has moved to a [larger] shop across the road. The reason given was that the building was to be converted into flats but observation shows nothing happening. It opened in 1936 with 910 seats in stalls and circle. Films ceased in 1982 and it was converted into a nightclub, which closed in December 2015. {3381}

Sent in by Harry Rigby; photo taken September 2010

ROCHDALE (Greater Manchester)

Planning permission has been granted for a new six-screen Reel cinema at the Riverside development. Demolition work has already started and construction is expected to begin this autumn. The development is expected to open in mid-2019.

Rochdale Observer - 15 April

SCARBOROUGH (North Yorks)

The Council has granted planning permission to two rival cinema schemes. Both developers have said the town could not support two multiplex cinemas. Work has already restarted on the new seven-screen Light cinema at North Bay See p26/27 last Bulletin.

Scarborough News - 20 April, 1 June

The Save the Futurist campaign group has begun legal proceedings against the Council to stop demolition plans. An application to have the building listed was rejected.

The Stage - 20 April; sent in by R David Simpson

SELSEY (West Sussex)

Proposals to redevelop the former Pavilion have been shelved whilst new plans are drawn up - see p24 Bulletin 51/2.

Chichester Observer - 4 May

SEVENOAKS (Kent)

The former Carlton has now been completely demolished. In its place is a residential block called Carlton Works. It opened in September 1935 and closed around 1954. It had since been in industrial use. {34807}

Sent in by Tim McCullen

SOUTHAMPTON

The grade II listed Mayflower Theatre [ex Gaumont] is to close between June and September next year for a £3.9m refurbishment. All 1,659 seats in the stalls and circle will be replaced and the seats in the balcony reupholstered. The auditorium will be repainted, the orchestra pit moved under the stage and a host of backstage improvements will be made. A campaign has been launched to raise the last £1.35m of the costs. {6296}

Daily Echo (Southampton) - 24 April; sent in by Ian Patterson;

The Stage - 27 April; sent in by R David Simpson

SOUTHBOROUGH (Kent)

The Royal Victoria Hall has been demolished. It was built in 1900 and was used as a silent cinema in the 1920s. It then reverted back to live theatre use until 2013. {43572}

Sent in by Tim McCullen

SOUTHEND ON SEA (Essex)

Empire Cinemas has signed up to operate an eleven-screen 1,370-seat multiplex on the Seaway car park. It will have a large-format IMPACT screen. Opening is scheduled for late 2019. It is unclear whether an operator has been appointed for a rival development at Southend Football Club. The town already has an eight-screen Odeon.

Southend Standard - 2 June

SOUTHPORT (Lancs)

Plans have been submitted for a 50-seat community cinema in the former Latin Lounge building. It will be called the Southport Bijou Cinema and tickets will be £5. No time scale has been given for the project.

Southport Champion - 24 May; Southport Visitor - 25 May

STAFFORD

The Picture House, now a Wetherspoon pub, recently showed films again. Staffordshire County Council along with Flatpack:Assemble showed a series of films on the large screen behind the bar. Customers enjoyed films including the 1952 classic *Singin' In The Rain* free of charge without having to book. The grade II listed building was designed by Campbell and Fairhurst and opened in 1913. {22692}

Wetherspoon News - Summer 2017; sent in by Mike Whitcombe

STAINES (Surrey)

Proposals for the revitalisation of the Bentall Centre include a four-screen boutique cinema at the Clarence Street end. No operator has been named. Staines already has a ten-screen Vue.

Surrey Comet - 12 May

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www.cinema-organs.org.uk

STOCKPORT (Greater Manchester)

The Prime Minister Theresa May visited the Plaza in early May during campaigning for the general election. She spoke to volunteers and had tea in the café. {1896}

Stockport Express – 3 May; sent in by Nick Taylor

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON (Warks)

The new four-screen Everyman opened on 9 June at Bell Court. One screen seats 148, the others between 97 and 60. Seating is a mixture of two- and three-seater sofas complete with small side tables. Two screens are capable of showing 3D. The town already has a two-screen Picturehouse, which has said it does not fear the competition.

Stratford-upon-Avon Herald – 18 May; sent in by Terry Hanstock

SUTTON (Surrey)



The six-screen Empire [ex UCI/Odeon] closed in June for refurbishment and enlargement. It is due to reopen with ten screens in December. {21190}

Sent in by Trevor Williams; photo taken February 2007

TAUNTON (Somerset)

A six-screen cinema is being planned for the Firepost development. Taunton already has an out-of-town eight-screen Odeon.

Somerset Live – 20 April

TUNBRIDGE WELLS (Kent)

A final planning application has been submitted to build an eight-screen cinema as part of the extension to Royal Victoria Place; no operator has been named. There is already an out-of-town nine-screen Odeon and it is possible that there could be a boutique cinema on the site of the former ABC.

Kent & Sussex Courier – 5 May

ULVERSTON (Cumbria)



The Roxy celebrated its 80th birthday on 21 June. A week of festivities was held, including a showing of the 1938 film *The Adventures of Robin Hood*. There was a photographic display covering the cinema's history. Links to articles in local papers: [tinyurl.com/yb2lhyrg] & [tinyurl.com/yaeos2ls]. The 310-seat auditorium is in the former circle and the Laurel and Hardy museum occupies the former stalls. [nm-cinemas.co.uk] {18520}

Westmorland Gazette – 1, 22 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken on CTA visit June 2008

WASHINGTON (Tyne & Wear)

The former Regal was destroyed in an arson attack in April. It opened as the Alexandra Theatre around 1910 and was modernised to become the Regal about 1936. It closed in the 1960s in favour of bingo but had closed by 2014. {43520}

Sent in by Ken Roe

WOLVERHAMPTON

Work is scheduled to start early next year on the Westside development; it that will include a twelve-screen cinema. No operator has been named. The site was cleared this year.

Express & Star – 30 May

YORK



Everyman is to take over the lease of the former Odeon from Reel Cinemas and will renovate the grade II listed building. It opened in February 1937 and was tripled in 1972. It was not the usual scheme as the circle was extended forward to create a stadium-style 820 seater with two 111 seat minis underneath. It currently has five screens with the other two 35 and 40 seats in previously unused spaces. The original Odeon sign is still in situ; it is part of the listing, since the non-standard design was required by the Council, even though the cinema was outside the City walls. {2788}

Screen Daily – 20 June; photo taken July 2006

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=9i_mG-qDzD8] Not directly related to cinemas. This 6¼ minute video is a history of the Wanamaker Organ at Macy's store in Philadelphia USA. The organ has 6 manuals and 28,750 pipes and is played regularly.
- ★ [www.visittheatres.org] A user-friendly guide to theatres' tours in Great Britain, Ireland, the Netherlands and Belgium. Find tours and research theatres' buildings' history and architecture.
- ★ [player.bfi.org.uk/film/watch-odeon-cavalcade-1973] The 1973 film *Odeon Cavalcade*, which outlines the history and architecture of the circuit, can now be viewed for free on the BFI Player. The film was enjoyed by members and guests at the 50th anniversary celebrations in January at Regent Street. *Sent in by Jeremy Buck.*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ybgpur99] *The Ten Prettiest Cinemas in London* – an article from *Time Out*.
Sent in by Gavin McGrath, R David Simpson & Nick Taylor.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y8qzqx7] An article from *The Stage* on unusual names for theatres. *Sent in by Nick Taylor.*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y8ftgkjj] An article in the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*: Nostalgia: Eleven cinemas we've loved and lost.
- ★ [pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kina_w_Krakowie] A history of the cinemas in Krakow, Poland (don't forget to translate).
Sent in by Gavin McGrath
- ★ [talkingpicturestv.co.uk] This channel is now available on channel 445 on Virgin Media cable. The Wikipedia entry is at: [tinyurl.com/ya3e5amv]. *Sent in by Nick Taylor.*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ycpox5dg] A *Hull Daily Mail* feature *Inside Hull's Abandoned Buildings* – includes the *Carlton* and the *National*.
Sent in by David Alexander.

HOLIDAY SNAPS



CINEMAS OF SOUTH-WEST FRANCE

1. La Cinéma de la Cité, Montauban (there's also a multiplex)
2. Le Quercy, Cahors
3. ABC, Cahors
(amazing that such a small town can support two cinemas)
4. Cinemas Concorde, Moissac
5. Le Querlys, St Antonin

The French have far more "arthouse cinemas" than we do.

Anthony Wills



ST QUENTIN (AISNE) FRANCE

The Carillon cinema [L] from 1920 lasted until closure in 2008. Architect Adolphe Grisel extensively rebuilt it in 1931 with 1,800 seats but only the façade from that rebuilding survived the subdivision into six screens and a later conversion into two shops. These shops have no interesting features in the public areas. The name Carillon relates to a local feature that still plays regularly.

Grisel was also the architect for the amazing Casino cinema [R] dating from 1929. This large facility had an associated café, bar and even a garage. Closed as a cinema in 1970, it then became a shop and it was later severely damaged by fire. It is in public ownership, an impressive façade, re-roofed with a mysterious empty interior and an uncertain future. Two monumental heads moulded in cement show Tragedy and Comedy, both are now wrapped due to falling masonry.

Bob Bradshaw

MAURITIUS

I recently sailed from Cape Town to Melbourne on the *Queen Mary 2* and came across the Ciné Klassic in Port Louis, Mauritius [R]. I couldn't go inside as there was a notice saying they were unable to screen films due to a technical fault! According to the excellent website [cinema.mu/cinema-movie-theatres-in-mauritius] it has two screens seating 800 and 600. There are 11 cinemas on the island, which is remarkable for a landmass of 2,030 km², however the centre is mountainous so the major towns are situated around the coastline. They show a high proportion of Indian films as 68% of the population are Indo-Mauritian.

Anthony Wills





This sorry photo (taken October 2016) shows the old Paris Cinema in the Estrela district of Lisbon, now awaiting demolition, according to local sources. It was built in 1931 with 885 seats across stalls and balcony and replaced the nearby Ciné Paris of 1916. Since closure in 1981, vandalism and neglect have seen the building become a health and safety risk to the detriment of its decorative art deco features, inside and out.

In 1994, the Paris was featured by director Wim Wenders in *Lisbon Story*, his drama-documentary commissioned by the City of Lisbon as part of their European City of Culture programme.

A number of alternative uses and restoration proposals for the Paris have been mooted over the years but, sadly, seem to have fallen foul of ongoing legal and bureaucratic disputes between the owners and the local authorities.

Chris Snowden



This is the Multikino in the biggest shopping mall in the centre of Warsaw. Some films are dubbed and some in the original language. It has eight screens and is run by Vue.

Malcolm Davis



THE SCALA BOSTON

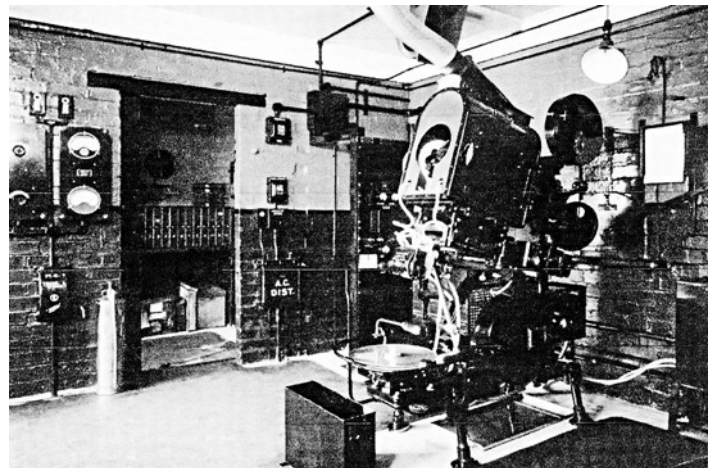
By Maurice Brader

The Scala Picture House in Boston (Lincs) was built on the site of a former mineral water factory owned by Messrs Joseph H Thomas and Sons; the Boston Scala Theatre Company having been formed in September 1913 by Nottingham solicitor WF Cox. It opened without ceremony on 17 March 1914 for the showing of *A Messenger of Discord* as the evening's main feature. It had a seating capacity for 1,000 patrons – lower stalls 886 and 114 in the upper balcony. It had a proscenium width of 24ft, giving a screen size of 18ft x 16ft and a stage of 12ft depth. The cinema had a café and restaurant for the convenience of its patrons.



The Scala Boston in 1929

In 1917 it was taken over by George Aspland-Howden, who installed two Ernemann IV projectors, which stayed in place until the installing of a Western Electric sound system in 1930, when Kalee 8s were fitted with both sound-on-disc and sound-on-film systems for the coming of sound [pictured below]. When World War II came the Scala closed on 29 June 1940 with Jane Withers in *The Chicken Wagon Family*, never to reopen again as a public cinema. It was then requisitioned as a garrison cinema for troops only.



After the war it remained unused for a number of years until it was converted into a furniture store-room owned by Brown Bros and Taylor. Later it became a Poundstretcher store [photographed here in 2003], using the lower stalls as their main shop and the former café and stage area as storerooms. Much of the interior still remains intact. The former cinema building now remains unused, due to Poundstretcher having moved out and taken over the former Woolworth store.



LETTERS

HAMMERSMITH DEMOLITION



This is the remains of the Hammersmith Cineworld [ex Regal] on 8 May. Very sad – a great old cinema.

Tony Duggan [photo]

RE: HUGH SYKES' 'WANDERINGS' IN THE LAST BULLETIN:

- Gaumont Beaufort Square, Chepstow, Gwent (1938, Enoch Williams and William Edward Trent): I have that all is left is the façade, everything else having been demolished.
- Picture Palace / Ritz, Frances Street, Newtownards, Co. Down, NI (c.1916, although HS has 1937): I have this as retail but he thinks it has been demolished.
- Electric Theatre / Picture House, Larne, Co. Antrim, NI (1911): I have no note of this existing, so HS's 'fate unknown' might indicate that it has indeed gone?
- Regal Larne, Co. Antrim, NI (1937): no note of this but does façade and foyer exist?

Richard Gray

- Picture Palace / Ritz Newtownards: Yes, this is in retail use.
- Electric Theatre / Picture House Larne: This was a distinctive timber-framed building. I have always believed it to have been demolished.
- Regal Larne: This has been completely demolished. The site is an unofficial car park.

David Simpson

RULES DON'T APPLY

I can relate to Mike Whitcombe's letter (Vol 51 no 3) concerning hard-to-find movies. Having watched Warren Beatty promoting his film *Rules Don't Apply* on BBC1, I was anxious to see it; however, despite living in an area of north London which is well endowed with cinemas (both arthouse and multiplex), I could not find it anywhere. As with Mike the excellent *New Park* cinema in Chichester came to my rescue with three showings on separate days; I made a special trip down there and thoroughly enjoyed the film. On making enquiries I discovered that it had performed badly in the States and been given a mauling by the Guardian's film critic; but surely a multiplex could have found room for it in its smallest screen for a week? Even the National Film Theatre has failed to give it an airing. I could however have seen it at the *One Hotel*, Aldwych for £55!

Anthony Wills

BUS TO THE ODEON



Spotted on the ceiling of a 97 bus, part of a mural depicting the Odeon at Mile End.

Sent in & photo by Gavin McGrath

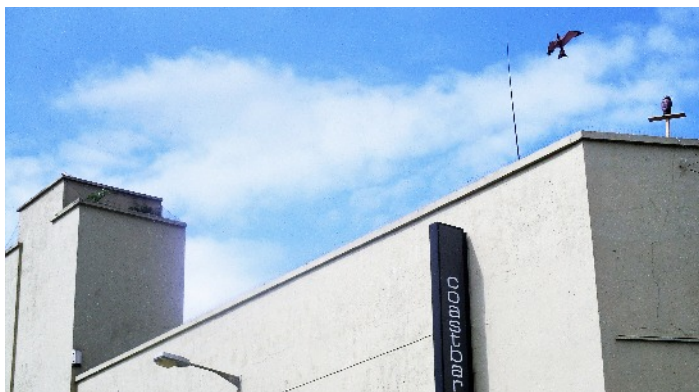
LEICESTER

Further to Ian Patterson's interesting letter in the last Bulletin, I was a regular visitor to the *Palace Theatre* and *Leicester City centre cinemas* in the 1950s. Yes, there were striptease shows but I don't recall the name of Pauline Page. I do however remember a Pauline Penny whose billing was 'She Strips To Conquer' and underneath her name 'the naughtiest girl of all'. These shows were very mild compared with what can be seen on the TV or cinema screen now; the girls were not allowed to move on stage. The *Palace* also presented variety shows, plays and an annual pantomime. After a show I used to go round to the stage door, armed with my autograph book, which I still have and have autographs, amongst others, of Mike and Bernie Winters, Jimmy Wheeler, Marty Wilde and a young Shirley Bassey. I also have Pauline Penny's autograph and a photo and a small collection of playbills, including those when she appeared.

Contained within the *Palace* complex on its left hand side was the passageway that led to the *Floral Hall* cinema. If a show was on you could hear it as you passed by. Today all the cinemas and theatres in the City centre have gone except the *Odeon*, opened 1938 which is now a party venue and banqueting suite and the *Little Theatre*. But take a walk up High street and you will see the narrow entrance of the former *Cameo* with the letters **ELECTRIC THEATRE** carved in stone. The facade of the former Gaumont still stands opposite the Market Place in a very rundown condition awaiting its fate, whilst on the other side of the market in Town Hall Square can be seen the three large centrally arched windows and blocked up exit doors of the former *Picture House*, which fronted Granby Street. The replacement buildings do not join each other, there being a yard between the two.

Carl Jennings

FAKE BIRDS DEFEND FORMER CINEMA



Look up and you find seagulls are being scared away from the roof of the former Odeon, Deal by an owl, a hawk tied to an aerial and maybe a third bird.

Martin Tapsell

A RESPONSE TO TED BOTTLE'S LETTER IN THE LAST BULLETIN.

I sympathise with Ted Bottle's comments in the last Bulletin about the to-day's lack of presentation, which is particularly apparent in the major circuit cinemas. Fortunately there are independent cinemas that still aim to 'put on a good show'. If he is able to visit London's West End there are currently productions at two theatres, which I think he would appreciate; *An American in Paris* at the *Dominion* and *42nd Street* at the *Theatre Royal Drury Lane*. Both use a traditional house curtain, beautifully lit, even if not with footlights. Both are musicals and both have their orchestra in an orchestra pit, not somewhere at the back or side of the stage or even in a room somewhere else! And both shows happen to be extremely good.

Tony Williams



CINEMA BUSINESS

CINEWORLD

Cineworld reported particularly strong audiences in the UK, Israel, Romania and Slovakia. Box office revenues between 1 January and 11 May grew 15.9% across the group and 17.3% in the UK and Ireland, compared with the same period last year. New Starbucks outlets and VIP areas helped lift retail revenue 19.7%; overall revenue grew 21.3%. Cineworld sold 100 million cinema tickets in 2016 and in the next four years plans to open 40 multiplexes.

Daily Mail – 19 May; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Barry Quinton

ODEON SALE

Odeon had a 'flash sale' in May. For a short time it offered 40% off ticket prices if you quoted a code when booking on-line or turning up at the cinema.

Daily Mirror – 20 May

CINEMA IN BRITAIN

In Britain last year, 168m cinema tickets were sold. These people spent an average of £19.18 at the cinema. Britain's top grossing cinema is believed to be the seventeen-screen Vue at the Westfield Centre in West London.

Sunday Times – 21 May

WEST COUNTRY MERGER



WTW Cinemas has joined forces with Scott Cinemas. WTW has four cinemas with a total of 14 screens; Scott has eight cinema with 19 screens. The cinemas will continue to trade under their existing names.

Comish Guardian – 31 May

TKTS

The famous TKTS discount ticket booth in London's Leicester Square is to be radically redesigned to include a performance space on the roof. The current building, a one-storey hut that was built in 1980, will be demolished.

The Stage – 8 June; sent in by Barry Quinton

MISCELLANY

LITTLEWOOD'S POOLS

The former Littlewood's building in Edge Lane, Liverpool has been sold and will now become a major film and television studio hub. It was built in an art deco style in 1938 and was used to process Littlewood's Pools Coupons. During the war its vast internal spaces were requisitioned. The building's mighty printing presses were used to print around 17m National Registration forms in just three days. Bomb shelters in the basement still contain wartime graffiti.

Liverpool Echo – 28 April; sent in by Mike Taylor

CARRY ON CRUISING?

City Cruises screened films on board its vessels on the River Thames five nights a week during June and July. This is believed to be London's first cinema sailing on the Thames with films such as *Jaws*, *La La Land* and *When Harry Met Sally* in the offing. Tickets start from £29.

Time Out; sent in by Gavin McGrath

SPAIN'S CHEAPEST CINEMA

A recent survey has found that the cheapest cinema in Spain is the two-screen Ciné Los Angeles, Santander where tickets for all showings cost €4.80 (about £4.20).

[carteleracinelosangeles.blogspot.co.uk]

El Pais (the Barcelona Daily Newspaper); sent in by Anthony Wills

NECROLOGY

PETER SALLIS OBE 96

Played Norman Clegg in all 295 episodes of *Last of the Summer Wine* over 37 years but is probably more widely-known to children as the voice of Wallace in the *Wallace and Gromit* films.

SIR ROGER MOORE KBE 89

Had a number of suave roles including Simon Templar in *The Saint* and Lord Brett Sinclair in *The Persuaders!* But the four-times married actor was ultimately the third official James Bond and appeared in seven of the films. He was a roving ambassador for UNICEF.

ADAM WEST 88

Is synonymous with the role of Batman / Bruce Wayne in the 1960s TV series. He went on to appear in several B-movies and also recently appeared on *Through the Keyhole* and in the 200th episode of *The Big Bang Theory*.

BRIAN MATTHEW 88

The godfather of modern radio DJs, he started his radio career with The British Forces Network in Hamburg. He presented *Saturday Club* in 1957 and *Easy Beat* three years later. He hosted *Sounds of the 60s* on BBC Radio2 from 1990 to 2016.

JOHN NOAKES 83

A former actor, John joined the BBC's *Blue Peter* team in 1965 and stayed for 12 years. His association on the show with animals included dog Shep and Lulu, the elephant that disgraced itself on-air.

ROY BARRACLOUGH MBE 81

The Preston-born actor first appeared in repertory in 1962. He went on to play one half of Cissie and Ada in the Les Dawson shows. He also played landlord Alec Gilroy in *Coronation Street* along with four other roles in the soap.

Sent in by Gavin McGrath & Barry Quinton



Here is a 1988 photo of Roger Moore visiting the Odeon Aylesbury. He is pictured [L] with manager Colin Hill [centre] and actress Maud Adams [R]. Colin was manager of the Odeon for ten years before moving to Leicester.

Sent in by Martin Tapsell



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

80 Years

Odeon 22 Castle Hill, Dudley. Opened 28 July 1937.
Architects Budge Reid / Harry Weedon. Listed Grade II. [no image]



Ritz (ABC), 122 Abbey Street, Nuneaton.
Opened 23 July 1937. Architects Verity & Beverly. Listed grade II.



Regal 67 Teme Street, Tenbury Wells.
Opened 29 July 1937. Architect Ernest S Roberts. Listed grade II.



Embassy (Cannon/ABC/Odeon/Everyman) 22 High Street, Esher.
Opened 23 August 1937. Architect David E Nye. Listed grade II.

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].

CAN YOU HELP US?



If anyone has information or photographs of the Wednesbury Gaumont/Odeon/Silver cinema please get in touch with us.
Photo above dated November 1949.

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

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.

MORE EVENTS

...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Dates for your diary

Porto, a late spring visit to Northern Portugal.

It has been decided that owing to the poor availability of hotel accommodation in Porto next May for the dates we require, the visit will be deferred to 2019 instead. Our work on organising this event has not been wasted; all of our contacts are aware of the situation and are looking forward to working with us in the future. We realise this will be disappointing news but we will advertise this event in a future issue of the Bulletin. Members who have already expressed an interest will be contacted as soon as a proposed new date is decided on.

Ray Ritmeester and Mark Price

Forthcoming talks & presentations

All Events will be held at The Gallery, Alan Baxter Associates, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EL. Further details will be published in future issues of the Bulletin.

Saturday 28 October 2017 'Double Bill'

The History of the Palace Theatre, Westcliff-on-Sea; illustrated talk by David Simpson and *The Phoenix Finchley and its Amazing Survival*; illustrated talk by Gerry Turvey.

Saturday 11 November 2017 Brief Encounters on Film

A review by Ken Roe & Richard Norman. A look at some feature films that used cinemas and theatres as location sets.

Saturday 13 January 2018 Members Slide Show & Social

Organised by Richard Norman Members wishing to submit talks and material please email: [RichardNormanCTA@aol.com].

Saturday 24 February 2018 The Final Curtain

Illustrated talk by Matt Lambros. Collection of high quality photographic images of US Movie Palaces from the recently published book of the same title.

Richard Norman

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

Saturday 29 July To Sir With Love (1967) [PG] +
Friday 4 August A United Kingdom (2016) [12A]
Saturday 2 September Bonnie and Clyde (1967) [15] +
Friday 15 September In the Heat of the Night (1967) [12A]

Films at 11am [except + 2:30pm] & 7:30pm.

Behind the Scenes tours at 11am on Mondays 31 July &

21 August; £6 – book or simply turn up.

Organ Coffee Morning 10am Saturday 2 September – admission free

Heritage Open Day Sunday 10 September from 10am free.

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].

23 September Sully (2016) [15]

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

THE REGAL EXPERIENCE, WYMONDHAM

Sunday 3 September Carve Her Name With Pride (1958) [U]
starring Virginia McKenna, Paul Schofield & Jack Warner
+ It's All Over Town (1960s musical short)

Shows at 2:30pm at the Wymondham Ex-Service's Club

(former Regal cinema) NR18 OAT [tinyurl.com/zddvkq4].

Further information from Michael Armstrong [01953 603246].

THE ROYALTY, BOWNESS-ON-WINDERMERE

Lake Road, LA23 3BJ [nm-cinemas.co.uk]

Silent film screening with Wurlitzer organ accompaniment at 1:00pm

Saturday 19 August: Clara Bow in the 1927 romantic comedy *It*

Saturday 16 September: 1929 Romantic Thriller *The Flying Scotsman*

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

Listed in the order in which they joined, we have been pleased to welcome the following to membership of the CTA: Nuneaton Local History Group, Robert de Ste Croix, James Weir, Paul Wilkins and Mark Chapman; also Nigel Greenslade, who has been enrolled as an Associate Member by an existing member.

DONATIONS

In acknowledgement of their generosity in adding a donation when renewing their subscriptions, our sincere thanks go to: TE Benton, WC Birnie, ME Burgoine, RD Burke, GR Burton, LR Carter, BR Chandler, M Charlesworth, B Claussen, MR Cleave, GR Cooper, L Culver, MR Cunningham, AR Davis, IJ Drummond, PJ Edmunds, JD Elliott, DW Foster, SW Freeman, RK Fuller, RJ Galloway, P Good, CD Harrison, RJ Hawley, PC Hennessey, RP Jefferies, HB Jones, RA Lascaut, TDC Laughlan, AV Mabey, WG Marriott, JL May, RJ McDonald, P Meiklerleid, P Mellor, JR Milling, PG Moules, B Palmer, JB Powell, PB Prosper, MJ Ryder, J Shevelan, RW Short, MP Shotton, RP Skinner, CH Smith, BH Snowball, M Taylor, PE Thackeray, PF Thomas, WJB Thomson, MW Thornton, D Trevor-Jones and M Wooffindin.

DEATHS

We learn that Norman G Buxton of Ipswich, who joined CTA in 1998, has died. As this was only by the return of the last Bulletin by Royal Mail with the word "deceased" hand-written on the envelope; no other details are available.

2017 AGM

CTA Members, who were unable to attend the recent Annual General Meeting of the CTA, may wish to obtain a copy of minutes of the previous AGM and the Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 28 February 2017. Please send a self-addressed A5 size envelope to the Secretary or Treasurer (addresses on page 2).

Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary



SMALL ADS

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

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

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

Display rates: eighth page – £15; quarter page – £25;

half page (horizontal or vertical) – £45; full page – £80

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 BUILDING BUFFS

This is a reprint of an article in *What's On In London* dated 13 February 1981 by Michael Darvell

One group that will bemoan the demise of the Odeon Lewisham this weekend is the Cinema Theatre Association, a collection of passionate cinema-goers who have, since 1967, built up their own following for the super cinemas of a bygone era. In their 14 years of existence they have traipsed the length and breadth of the country looking at old picture palaces, studying the architectural features with a loving eye and a perpetual fascination for the finer points of detail that would escape the gaze of most patrons who visit these buildings. This Sunday, 15 February 1981, the Association will take a conducted tour of the **Palace Theatre** in Clarendon Road, Watford, which was, in its time, used as a cinema but combined with music hall entertainment. After studying this not uninteresting property a tour of the local **Odeon Film Centre** will be made. This dates from 1937 when it opened as a **Gaumont** complete with a **Wurlitzer** organ and a café. It is now a triple-screen property. The afternoon's pleasure will be completed by a trip round the **Ladbroke bingo** and social club in King Street. This began life in 1913 as the **Central Hall Picture House** with an orchestral accompaniment to the silent films. Later it became the **Regal** and ended its life as the **Essoldo**. This tour de force of Watford's pleasuredomes begins at 1:45 and finishes at approximately 5:15. Refreshments we are told, will be on sale (presumably in the foyer) at the old **Essoldo**.



The Palace Theatre Watford in July 2006

Any group that pursues an interest with such dedication is bound to contain its own flavour of nuttiness. The Cinema Theatre Association is no exception to the rule. But here I must pause and declare an interest, if not a responsibility, for being one of the four founder members of the group way back in 1967. I remember it well, the day we met in the booking hall of the **National Film Theatre** each clutching a copy of the particular issue of *Films and Filming* in which the advertisement placed by Eric A George appeared, canvassing all those who were interested in forming a study group for cinema building rather than the films that are shown in them to get in touch. And from such small beginnings was formed what has now become a large and not unimportant organisation of about 300 members all over the country who meet and correspond regularly through the CTA's bi-monthly *Bulletin*.

Although I was one of the founders. I have dropped out owing to other commitments but still follow with interest the workings of this unique group. What seemed to me in 1967 of perhaps minor and passing interest has, it appears, become an obsession with many of the Association's members. The detail contained in the *Bulletin* is amazing. It is especially strong on historical coverage and often devotes whole articles to one cinema or geographical area. Hence such titles to the contributions as: *The Alma Kinema, Luton*; *The Odeon Theatre, Colwyn Bay*; *Notes on the Regal, Abingdon*; or *A Sad Story at Scunthorpe* (the closure of the **Classic**, Cole Street). Would you have thought there was that much to say about the cinema situation in 1981? Well, with all the closures and the changing use of cinemas it appears that, yes, there



The former Regal/Essoldo Watford in July 2006

is a lot to report on the state of the cinema as a building, an architectural feature, an entity in its own right. And the CTA is one group that actually cares about cinemas. It is doubtful whether the Association has any real power in being able to persuade authority (the Greater London Council, the Rank Organisation, EMI) into doing anything about the preservation of old cinemas but it has formed a useful and informed body of opinion on the subject. It is able to make representations to these bodies to try to just convince them that maybe their properties are worth saving for future generations to enjoy.

The Department of the Environment has already listed several properties including the **Mecca** of the cinema world the famous **Granada Tooting**: once a glorious super cinema in the Spanish style and the pride of **Sidney Bernstein**, it no longer shows films. The CTA regrets the passing of the **Granada Tooting** as a cinema but is relieved that at least it is extant: the hall of mirrors, the spectacular staircase, the front lobby are all still there to be seen and probably visited by pilgrims from the Association for many years to come.

Apart from visits to cinemas the Association arranges talks and slide shows, has its own archive of books, photographs and information on the subject and hopes to provide as complete a picture as possible of the passing cinema scene. It also publishes a *Directory of Cinemas* ‡ at £1.40, which is a guide to the cinemas operating in the UK. It also lists photographs available through the Association, so if you're looking for a study of the **Maxime**, **Sketty**, **Swansea** or the **Ritz Linlithgow**, then your search stops here. If this sounds like your idea of fun write to **Marcus Eavis**, or just turn up at the **Palace Theatre** in Watford for the grand tour beginning at 1:45. The Annual General Meeting in May will also include a visit to a central London cinema, possibly either the **Odeon Leicester Square** or, as the CTA still quaintly refer to it, the **New Victoria**, which the world now knows as the **Apollo**.

‡ No longer available



The Odeon Leicester Square in April 2016