

50  
years

CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

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

# BULLETIN

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The Vue [ex Warner] Leicester Square, which has reopened after a £6.6m refurbishment – see Newsreel p28; photo 19 July by Allen Eyles



The 28-seat Everyman at King's Cross – see p26 last Bulletin; photo taken July 2017



## FROM YOUR EDITOR

Thanks you to all who rallied to my call for more articles and holiday snaps. I now have enough for this Bulletin and have had to hold some over. Please keep them coming as my stock will run out some day.



Here is a picture of an Agapanthus just coming out in my garden. It reminded me of an ABC chandelier; turn the page upside down. There is a fine example [although probably a reproduction] in Wetherspoons Coronet in the former Savoy/ABC in Holloway, north London. I have included the photo next to the plant so you can compare.

In the last issue I told you we had been on holiday to Scotland. I forgot to mention that, when we were researching our route, we found that Google Streetview had captured the Screen Machine mobile cinema at Durness in Scotland. This is probably the most northwesterly village on the British mainland. Although we were there in June, the weather was more like March!



On the back page you will find some more pictures and information about the Storyhouse in Chester, a conversion and addition to the former Odeon. On one of the emails I got, the sender had missed the 't' out of the name so it read 'Soryhouse'. I leave you to decide whether this describes the building or not!



On the subject of holidays, I took the above photo when on holiday in August. But where was I and what was the cinema? No prizes – answer next time. Hint: England.

*Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor*

## CARTOON CORNER



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

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE  
FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER**

## CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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**BULLETIN:** Members are invited to submit items for possible publication to the Bulletin Editor. However, it is stressed that the publication of an item does not necessarily imply that it reflects the views of the Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor. It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise; items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor. Please enclose SAE and state if you require items to be returned, otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.  
**VISITS:** Members and non-members are reminded that they attend visits entirely at their own risk and no responsibility can be accepted by the Cinema Theatre Association or the owners of the buildings for any accidents or injury sustained during the course of any visit.  
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# VISITS AND EVENTS

## Double Bill of Illustrated Talks

Saturday, 28 October at 6:30pm (doors open 6pm)

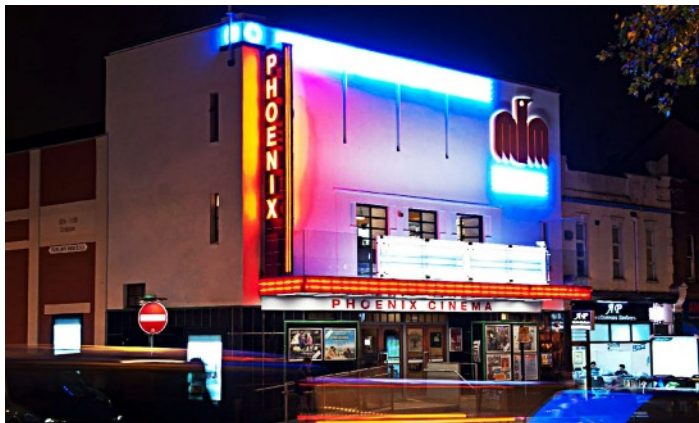
THE HISTORY OF THE **PALACE** THEATRE, WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA  
BY DAVID SIMPSON



David, a CTA member and the archivist at the **Palace Theatre**, Westcliff-on-Sea, presents an illustrated talk about this lovely provincial theatre from conception in 1905, through its eventual opening in October 1912 and its many trials and tribulations in the years since then. It's also the story of one remarkable woman, whose legacy provided the foundation of the theatre's success today. Over the years management companies have come and gone and there have been periods of closure but the Grade II listed theatre has defied all the odds. With just 600 seats it has an intimacy beloved of performers and we'll hear about some famous names who started their careers at this lovely theatre.



THE **PHOENIX** FINCHLEY AND ITS AMAZING SURVIVAL  
BY GERRY TURVEY



Gerry has been associated with the **Phoenix** for a considerable time and has fully researched its amazing history, producing a book on the subject. The **Phoenix** is often referred to as one of the very few oldest surviving cinemas in continuous use.

His illustrated presentation will inform us about its initial guise as the **Picturedrome**, changing its name as it evolved through changes of ownership and commercial pressure, the threats it experienced, the physical changes it underwent and how its policies allowed it to survive against competition in Finchley and Muswell Hill from the development of new concerns like the **Gaumont** and other big local cinemas of the 1930s.

**Venue:** The Gallery at Alan Baxter Associates, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EL (see below for travel directions).

**Admittance:** £8 on the door (includes light refreshments), Non-Members welcome as guests.

## Brief Encounters on Film

Saturday 18 November at 5:30pm (doors open 5pm)

By Richard Norman and Ken Roe



Taking its title from the 1945 British classic film *Brief Encounter*, this illustrated talk reviews some feature films that used actual cinema or theatre buildings (interiors and exteriors) as a location for part of the plot. Using film clips, this will be a chance to rediscover vanished and surviving buildings

and show how studio tricks and disguises were employed to create a scene. This joint presentation will be of interest to cinema and theatre enthusiasts and movie buffs. The talk will include a break for light refreshments.

**Venue:** The Gallery at Alan Baxter Associates, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EL (see below for travel directions)

**Admittance:** £8 on the door (includes light refreshments), Non-Members welcome as guests.

**Getting there:** On leaving Farringdon (old) station (not the Turnmill Street exit), turn left – or when leaving Farringdon Main Line station, turn right – and walk east 150 yards towards 'Snappy Snaps' shop. Entrance to The Gallery is opposite; walk through the large gates, cross the courtyard to the far end, turn right down the steps and you're there!

A chance for Members on the South coast to see the above CTA presentation (held on 18 November)

*Brief Encounters on Film* – By Richard Norman  
Thursday, 23 November (see times below)

In collaboration with the **Pavilion Theatre** Bournemouth, it has been arranged to present the above talk following their season's final lunchtime organ concert of light music. (Organist John Mann).

See two shows in an afternoon!

- 1:00pm – John Mann's organ concert (£3.50) (1 hour duration)
- 2:00pm – Refreshment break
- 3:00pm – 'Brief Encounters on Film' (£5.00) (2 hour duration)

Tickets only available on the door (no advance booking).

## Dates for Your Diary

### CHRISTMAS WITH MIRTH IN WALTHAMSTOW

Put **Wednesday 20 December** in your diary as the date for this year's Christmas party to be held at the 'Mirth, Marvel and Maud' bar, located in what were the foyer areas of the former **Granada** Hoe Street, Walthamstow in north-east London. The **Granada**, dating from 1930, was one of the most spectacular of the circuit's cinemas and is now listed Grade II\*. The auditorium awaits restoration but meanwhile the Antic pub group are utilising the foyers to good effect – 'Mirth' conjures up to the convivial atmosphere of a pub, 'Marvel' is the cinema itself and 'Maud' refers to one of the screening rooms under the balcony! The party will start at 6:30pm but we hope also to visit to other cinema buildings in the area during the afternoon. More details in the next Bulletin.

Richard Gray, Ken Roe & Kevin Gooding

### FORTHCOMING TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS:

These will be held at The Gallery, Alan Baxter Associates.

**Saturday 13 January 2018**

**Members' Slide Show and Social,**  
Organised by Richard Norman.

Members wishing to submit talks or material, please email: [RichardNormanCTA@aol.com].

**Saturday 24 February 2018**

**'After The Final Curtain' An illustrated talk by Matt Lambros.**

A collection of high quality photographic images and a revue of *US Movie Palaces* from his recently published book of the same title.



## 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

There is still time to book for our trip to the Swedish island of Gotland next summer (see the July/August edition of the Bulletin for the full announcement), staying in a comfortable hotel in the island's historic capital, Visby. We have recently learned that 2018 will be the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ingmar Bergman's birth and that his centenary will be celebrated at venues across the island as well as at the Bergman Centre on Fårö, which is included in our tour.

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 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 on Sunday 12 August for a one night stay in the Elite Hotel Palace, close to the station on the new direct railway line to Nynäshamn and we will travel by train and ferry to Visby the following morning (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). Those taking the 'via Stockholm' option will return on Saturday 18 August by ferry and train to the Palace for another one night stay, checking out on Sunday 19 August. A number of members have asked about extending their stays and we are negotiating rates with both hotels for extra nights, independently bookable. The 'via Stockholm' option including hotels in Stockholm and Visby for a total of seven nights, the train and ferry, will cost around £760 per person 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 per person 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 we 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 at [balnebo@gmail.com].

## 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 REGAL EXPERIENCE, WYMONDHAM

Sunday 1 October *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) [A]  
+ *Calling All Girls* (a tribute to Warner Bros musicals of the 30s)  
Sunday 19 November *There's No Business Like Show Business*  
+ A Look at Life special - Helen Shapiro *Walking Back to Happiness*

Shows at 2:30pm at the Wymondham Ex-Service's Club (former Regal cinema) NR18 0AT [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.

Saturday 16 September: Romantic Thriller *The Flying Scotsman* 1pm

Saturday 28 October: *The Cat and the Canary* (1927) 10:45pm

## THE PLAZA STOCKPORT

Sunday 8 October Happy 85<sup>th</sup> birthday to the Plaza.

On the weekend 7/8 October 1932 the Plaza opened her doors with a *Laurel & Hardy* screening followed by *Out of the Blue* starring Jessie Matthews. To celebrate we are presenting:

*Another Fine Mess* Family Day [U] 2pm  
*The Smallest Show on Earth* (1957) [U] 6pm  
Organ preludes on the mighty Compton organ

Monday 9 October A free full 1½ hour tour of the building [10:30am]

If any members plan to attend the event and wish to stay overnight on Sunday in Stockport, they may like to know that two new budget price hotels have recently opened, within a very short walking distance from the Plaza. The Holiday Inn Express is adjacent to the railway station and The Travelodge, which can be seen from the Plaza front doors.

Further information from Nick Taylor 0161 477 9039

Tuesday 31 October Halloween Double Bill [PG] at 7:30pm

*The Wolf Man* + *The Bride of Frankenstein*

Friday 17 November *Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street* (1947) [U]

Films at 11am and 7:30pm except where stated.

Behind the Scenes tours at 11am on Mondays 30 October & 13 November; £6 - book or simply turn up.

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

### THE FECKENODEON (Worcestershire, B96 6HN)

This year's programme is now on-line. CTA members wishing to attend can book tickets (£5) at [www.feckencodeon.co.uk] or by phone through TicketSource on 0333 666 3366 (local call rate) - or you can contact the Society directly on [films@feckencodeon.co.uk].

23 September *Sully* (2016) [15]

28 October *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957) [U]

11 November *Suite for the Fallen Soldier*

a big screen showing of last year's concert tribute to soldiers of WW1  
Shows on Saturdays at 7:30pm. Licensed bar at all performances.

### BRADFORD WIDESCREEN WEEKEND 2017

12-15 October, Pictureville, Bradford, BD1 1NQ.

The programme includes:

*The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm* in 3-strip Cinerama;  
*Dunkirk*, *The Untouchables*, *Lawrence of Arabia* in 70mm;  
*Jailhouse Rock*, *Apocalypse Now (Redux)*, *The Fortune Cookie* in 35mm  
*Windjammer*, *My Fair Lady*, *Sleeping Beauty* in digital.

Full details at [tinyurl.com/ybfq434g]. Passes are now on sale.

### FRANK MATCHAM'S MASTERPIECES ON FILM

Wednesday 25 October 2017, 2:30pm (2 hr duration)

Victoria & Albert Museum, South Kensington, London SW7 2RL

To mark the first European Historic Theatres Day, the Frank Matcham Society is joining forces with the V&A's Department of Theatre and Performance to host an illustrated talk by Richard Norman. Frank Matcham designed many theatres, some of which have been used in feature films as locations sets. This will be an opportunity to appreciate what they were like, especially if they no longer exist. A selection of these films will be reviewed and discussed in an illustrated talk created to highlight Frank Matcham's work as 'theatre architect extraordinaire'.

**Admittance and Booking:** Please send a cheque for £10 per ticket made payable to 'The Frank Matcham Society' with SAE to Rachel Woodforde, 69a Mill Street, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2EE. Closing date: Friday 13th October 2017. (Seats are not sold on the door.)

PLEASE SEE ENCLOSED LEAFLET FOR FURTHER DETAILS

EMPIRE

SHREWSBURY 62257  
Sunday, October 8 for 7 days

MEL BROOKS

HIGH ANXIETY

Week 1.55 4.5 6.20 8.45 Sunday 5.20 7.40

CAPTAIN SCOTT GOES EAST

Week 3.25 5.40 8.5 Sunday 7.00



# 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	<b>Special Issue</b> featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; <b>Ideal</b> Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; <b>Granada</b> Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; <b>Albert Hall</b> Sheffield; <b>Regal</b> Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Gaumont Managers; <b>Carlton</b> Swansea; Committee's Choice.
No 26	£4.50	<b>Paramount</b> Newcastle; Edward Stone; <b>Granada</b> Men; E de Wilde Holding; <b>Electric</b> Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New <b>Victoria/Apollo</b> ; <b>Whiteladies</b> Bristol; Clark & Fenn; <b>Compton</b> Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; <b>Torbay</b> Cinema; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; <b>Apollo</b> Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: <b>Essoldo</b> – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the <b>Essoldo</b> Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the <b>New Victoria</b> Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	<b>Beaufort</b> Birmingham; <b>Granada</b> Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophane lighting; Imitations of <b>Odeon</b> ; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; The <b>Clifton</b> Circuit; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the <b>Electric Palace</b> Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; <b>Palace</b> Conwy; <b>Carlton</b> Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two <b>Regals</b> ; <b>Odeon</b> North Finchley; <b>Majestic</b> Oxford; Films at the <b>Royal Albert Hall</b> .
No 40	£6.00	<b>Tolmer</b> Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham – a <b>Granada</b> man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary; <b>Plaza</b> Stockport; <b>Grosvenor</b> Rayners Lane; <b>Majestic</b> 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 Publications

### Electric Pictures – A Guide to the Films, Film-makers and Cinemas of Worthing and Shoreham

By Ellen Cheshire and James Clarke. A5 paperback, 130 pages, fully illustrated, £12.99 plus postage.

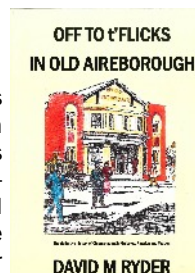
As the subtitle suggests, this is not just a history of cinema buildings in these Sussex towns. Although there are chapters about the cinemas of Worthing, Shoreham and Lancing, the majority of the book describes the film-making and film production that took place there. This is sure to be of interest to many members. The book commemorates 120 years of film in these towns, capturing the region's rich cinematic legacy and its place in British film history. From film-making pioneers through to blockbuster films and key events in the film history of the coast, this book draws on research from film archive and local history resources to tell the story. Richly illustrated and featuring contributions from local historians and film and theatre specialists, including Kevin Brownlow, there is also a chapter about Sir Sydney Samuelson and a Heritage Trail guide to key locations and the cinemas.



### Off To t'Flicks In Old Aireborough The definitive history of cinema-going in Guiseley, Rawdon and Yeadon

By David M Ryder. A4 paperback, 88 pages, fully illustrated. £9.95 plus postage.

With the aid of contemporary newspaper reports and advertisements, recorded interviews with those involved, minute books and booking diaries and his own memory, local film historian and archivist (and CTA member) David Ryder has produced a comprehensive history of the cinemas in these Yorkshire towns. The story takes us from October 1907, when the first flickering images were projected onto a screen in Yeadon's **Temperance Hall**, to another October evening 79 years later when the projectors were finally turned off in the two studio cinemas in the former balcony of the Yeadon Picture House – or "New Uns" as it was affectionately known. David first started work on this project in 1986 and the result makes for a fascinating read.



### Still Available (reviewed in the last issue)

**Screen Stories: Lewes Goes to the Pictures**  
£8.99 plus postage.

### Coming Soon

Reprints of the two out-of-print circuit histories **ABC** and **Gaumont** are due from the printers shortly and full information should be available by the next Bulletin. If you would like to be kept informed when copies are available, send an email to the Sales Officer at [sales@cta-uk.org] or drop him a line at the address shown below and you'll be the first to know!

### Ordering

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

Orders to Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales, 34, Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN. Cheques/POs payable to Cinema Theatre Association, or send credit/debit card number with expiry date and security code. A complete sales list is available by sending an SAE or can be seen on the CTA website [www.cta-uk.org] where you can also place your order, using PayPal. A sales list is sent with every order.

### Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer) The Smallest Show on Earth

By Patrick Church [Abbeygate Picturehouse, Bury St Edmunds]  
248 pages, paperback, illustrated, ISBN 978-1786297990  
£9.99 from the cinema, Waterstones or Amazon.



# CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

## Grade II\* Listed



The **Regal** in Uxbridge, utilised as a nightclub for a considerable period, is likely to receive revisions to name and image, which may entail interior alteration and redecoration. The Association is pressing not only for reduction of the numerous floor level insertions installed during a previous adaptation but also for a more sympathetic colour scheme, which in tandem would render the atypical and noteworthy deco motifs more discernible. {13729} *Photo above taken March 2004.*

The exterior of the **Dreamland Cinema** at Margate has now been restored and resembles its appearance upon opening, with only minor differences in signage. The local Council is to be contacted to ascertain the intended progression of the restoration. {15123}

## Grade II Listed

A meeting is to be arranged with the prospective purchaser of the **Royalty** at Harborne in order to discuss his projected strategy for its future. A car cleaning facility has now opened on an adjacent site, yet the building currently remains at risk of vandalism. {1836}



Various operators have recently considered a reversion of the **Grand** at Westbourne [Bournemouth] to cinematic operation following its protracted employment as a bingo hall. To date none has advanced a definitive proposal; regrettably, however, all have indicated that they would intend to convert the auditorium to a triple cinema.

*Photo above taken May 2006.*

A watching brief is being maintained on the major scheme about to be undertaken at the **Hyde Park Picture House** in Leeds. Particular concern exists over the future of the foyer, which exhibits great charm with its multiplicity of original features including secondary lighting by gas. {1836} *Photo on p5 last Bulletin.*

The **Odeon** [now **Reel**] in York has become a unit in the **Everyman Cinemas** chain. Attention is to be drawn to the importance of the significant frieze in the foyer. {2788} See Newsreel p30.

It is reported that the insurance cover for the **Regent** in Lyme Regis, destroyed by fire, is insufficient to reproduce the original design. Therefore, with the probable resultant curtailment of construction of a true replica, unease arises that either a pastiche or a nondescript contemporary cinema may result. Contact is thus to be initiated with **NBDA Architects**, which company is leading the design and feasibility studies.

## Unlisted

The frieze from the façade of the **Gaumont** in Doncaster is under consideration for relocation to **Carswell Hall Museum**, should the latter body be successful in procuring a new building. See p5 Bulletin 51/1. {18617}

A planning application relating to the **Embassy** [Gaumont/Odeon] at Chadwell Heath has received comment from the Association, which includes a recommendation that the cinema should receive **Asset of Community Value** designation. The building spent an extensive period functioning as a bingo club, following which it has been operated without planning permission as a wedding and banqueting facility. {14646}

Unfortunately a campaign to save the **Odeon** in South Hackney and designate it an **Asset of Community Value** was unsuccessful; Hackney council subsequently granted permission for demolition. {13886}

Support has been given to an application for a development encompassing the site of the **Forum** in Ealing, the frontage of which would be incorporated into the scheme in largely sympathetic manner. A desire has been expressed to move the preserved arched façade of the nearby **Walpole** into the development; however at present this remains merely an aspiration. {3772} {13836}

## And in brief:



- ◆ The **Odeon** [now **Empire**] in Bromley is to be transferred to the **Cineworld** chain. The CTA Archive has been made available to the architect responsible for renovation work. {14116} *Photo above taken September 2006.*
- ◆ The religious organisation that owns the **Rialto** in Upper Norwood has placed the building on the market; a local group has expressed interest in its acquisition. {28989}
- ◆ The **Royal** in Plymouth has received **Asset of Community Value** status, which provides a somewhat more positive outlook for this notable cinema. {13836}
- ◆ The pylon of the **Odeon** in Redhill has been saved and remains in situ. {33941}
- ◆ Campaigners against demolition of Scarborough's **Futurist Theatre** were granted, yet subsequently lost, a judicial review into the Council's handling of the case. {1842}
- ◆ The new owner of the **ABC** in Stoke Newington wishes to restore the venue; he is to be furnished with original images of the interior.





# FROM CTA BULLETIN VOLUME 1, 1967

## Last Round Up at the Buffalo

At the end of August projectors flickered for the last time at the Buffalo, Ashington, Northumberland. Home of Westerns for nearly fifty years The Buffalo was one of a small circuit of cinemas founded by Walter Lawson as Wallaw Pictures.

A spokesman for Wallaw said that everything possible had been done to try and keep the Buffalo going. Of late horror and Certificate X films had been tried, in addition to Westerns. The building will now be sold and Wallaw will concentrate on keeping Ashington's remaining two cinemas open - The Regal and The Wallaw.

The Original Lawson cinema was the Old Miner's Welfare Hall and Ashington (pop. 25,000) supported five cinemas at one time. Of the Company's other halls the Wallaw at Blyth is now ABC controlled and the one at Newbiggin-by-Sea has gone over to Bingo.

The Buffalo went out like a lamb - the last presentation was Hayley Mills in THE FAMILY WAY.

The same week-end, films were discontinued at the Princess Cinema in Birstall, Yorkshire. The Princess had been running for some time with Cine-Bingo, that is Bingo for several nights of the week and films the remainder.

According to Star Cinemas, the decision to discontinue film shows was regretted, but it had been found out by experience that audiences were turning up expecting to play Bingo on film evenings and Bingo shows were more profitable. The end of films means that Batley and Birstall (combined population 45,000) are now without a cinema.

G. J. Mellor

## For Your Diary

On Monday, June 5th, there will be a meeting of the Association in the small cinema at the National Film Theatre, commencing at 7.30 p.m. Speaker to be arranged.

On Sunday July 2nd, we shall meet at 2.30 p.m. at the Brixton Astoria (Southern Region from Victoria to Brixton or a short walk from Stockwell Tube Station). We shall then proceed to the Granada, Brixton, arriving there at 4.45 p.m.

The following two visits will be on August 6th and September 3rd. It is hoped on one of these dates to arrange a tour of London cinemas.

If you know of any cinema worth visiting, please let the Hon. Secretary know.



# CINEMA NEWS – 50 YEARS AGO

## When the CTA was founded in 1967...

Compiled by Harry Rigby & Ken Roe

### September

3<sup>rd</sup> The Gala British Première of *Two Weeks in September* is held at the Playhouse Theatre in Glasgow. {7184}



The Regal/Wedgwood Staveley in April 2005

4<sup>th</sup> The 808-seat former Regal at Staveley [Derbys] reopened as the Wedgwood after being closed for just over a year. Films ceased two years later and bingo took over. {33438}

7<sup>th</sup> The première of *To Sir, With Love* is held at the Astoria Charing Cross Road [R]. {2499}

16<sup>th</sup> The 727-seat Sutton Grand Cinema in Dublin closes and is converted into a supermarket. {40666}



The Picturedrome Holmfirth in August 2005

16<sup>th</sup> The 400-seat Picturedrome in Holmfirth [West Yorks] closes in favour of bingo. {2432}

28<sup>th</sup> The Plaza in Dublin [Ireland] is converted into a 754-seat Cinerama theatre, opening with *Grand Prix*. {11606}

20<sup>th</sup> *Two for the Road* was the last film to play in the original auditorium of the Odeon Leicester Square [London] before it closed for 'modernisation'. It reopened in December. {841}

27<sup>th</sup> The Plaza Theatre in Regent Street, London closed as a single screen with the Blake Edwards film *Gunn* starring Craig Stevens. The sumptuous Italian Renaissance style interior was gutted to become a twin-screen cinema. {2503}

28<sup>th</sup> A season of films opened at the 1,219-seat Cambridge Theatre in London and lasted about four months. Film seasons had played here before. {30509}

30<sup>th</sup> Films cease at the Queens Hall cinema in Palmers Green [London] shortly after being taken over by Star Cinemas. Bingo took over but did not last long before the building was demolished in 1971. {31140}

30<sup>th</sup> The 294-seat Tatler News Theatre in central Manchester closed. Two weeks later it became a BFI regional film theatre. {33860}

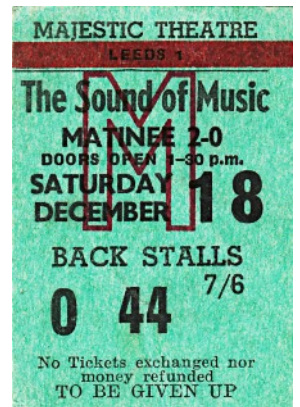


The Berkeley Hull in July 2005, shortly before demolition

30<sup>th</sup> The 1,200-seat Berkeley in Hull closes and becomes a bingo club. The cinema had been built in 1956 in a post-war housing estate and so only lasted 12 years. The bingo lasted longer – about 40 years. {44997}

?? The *Sound of Music* finishes a 128-week run in 70mm at the 2,392-seat Majestic in Leeds [West Yorks]. {2718}

?? The 1,460-seat Metropole in the St Paul's district of Bristol is taken over by Star Cinemas. It soon becomes a part-time cinema / bingo operation and films cease the following year. Bingo closed in 1974 and intermittent cinema operations followed until 1980. {44606}



The former Odeon Sidcup as a swimming pool in July 2006

?? The Odeon Sidcup reopens as a swimming pool. {27808}

?? Mecca buys five cinemas from the Scottish-based George Green circuit; the Playhouses at Dundee {21356}, Ayr {23270} and Wishaw {22992} and the Picture House in Paisley {23265} would remain as cinemas but the Pavilion Bathgate {24307} would close and become a bingo club. The cinemas didn't last long.

?? The 887-seat Kensington Cinema in Thorne [South Yorks] closes in favour of bingo, just months after being taken over by Star Cinemas. {27444}

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 photos from Kiné Weekly 1967, scanned by Ken Roe



## October

- 7<sup>th</sup> The ABC Victoria in Cambridge reopens after the 'Luxury Lounge' treatment. The first film was *Doctor Zhivago* in 70mm. {36850}



The Coronet Elephant & Castle in March 2004

- 9<sup>th</sup> The 2,315-seat Coronet in London's Elephant & Castle was modernised and renamed ABC. The façade was covered with blue metal sheeting. Only the stalls area was used, having had the 'Luxury Lounge' treatment. The reopening film was *Bonnie and Clyde*. Films ceased in November 1999 and the stalls seats were removed to become a music venue. {27019}
- 12<sup>th</sup> The Gala opening première of *Thoroughly Modern Millie* is held at the new Odeon St Martin's Lane in London [R]. The subterranean cinema had 737 seats and a floating screen. Ray Cossey, formerly of the Gaumont Norwich, was appointed manager of the new Odeon; he became the youngest of Rank's West End managers. *Thoroughly Modern Millie* played for about a year. {2509}



The Byron Hucknall in May 2008

- 13<sup>th</sup> The Byron Hucknall [Notts] closes as a single-screen cinema to be split into a 404-seat cinema upstairs and bingo downstairs. It reopened in December. Films ceased in June 2006. {13428}
- 14<sup>th</sup> The 2,252-seat Essoldo (ex Savoy) Hayes [then in Middlesex] closed with *Attack of the Crab Monsters*. It became a bingo club. {30166}
- 15<sup>th</sup> The World Première of *Dr Faustus* is held at the ABC Ritz in Oxford with Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor in attendance. {22679}
- 16<sup>th</sup> The Royal Première of *Far From the Madding Crowd* is held at the Odeon Marble Arch. {1830}
- 18<sup>th</sup> The World Première of *How I Won the War* is held at the London Pavilion Piccadilly Circus [photo top next column]. {2496}
- 19<sup>th</sup> The World Première of *Pretty Polly* is held at the Astoria Charing Cross Road [R]. {2499}
- 19<sup>th</sup> ABC2 opens in Glasgow, a 922-seat new-build adjacent to the existing Regal/ABC. {38564}



- 26<sup>th</sup> The European Charity Première of *The Happiest Millionaire* starring Tommy Steele is held at the Leicester Square Theatre [above]. {910}
- 28<sup>th</sup> The 1,132-seat Picture House in Doncaster closes. It had been operated by ABC, who had opened a new cinema nearby in May. {19934}



The Hillsborough Park cinema in Sheffield in February 2005

- 29<sup>th</sup> The 1,300-seat Hillsborough Park Cinema in Sheffield closed with a double [X] programme. It reopened a week later as a bingo club. {25743}
- ?? The Astonia at Baldock [Herts] began bingo sessions on Wednesday and Friday evenings. Films finally ceased in 1969 although bingo continued until 1986. {48446}
- ?? The 400-seat Castle cinema in Newcastle Emlyn [Carmarthen] closes and the building is given over to retail use. {32641}

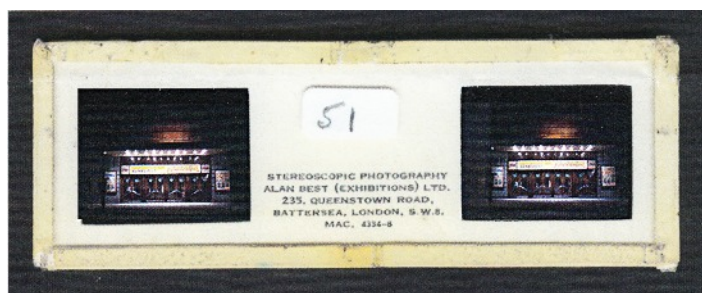


# STEREOSCOPIC CINEMAS

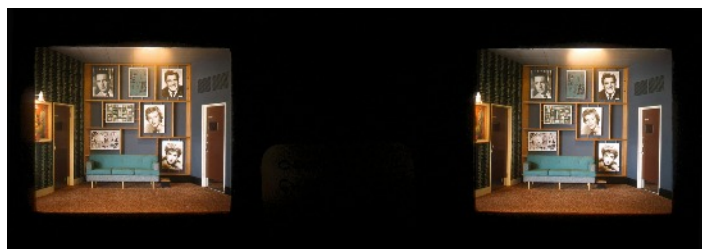
By Harry Rigby

A collection of stereoscopic [3D] slides has been donated to the CTA Archive by Carl Chesworth. A friend of mine, Ian Fagg, generously scanned all the slides and reported:

They appear to be a pair of 35mm transparencies mounted in a glass mount. On examination they seem to have been shot using Dufaycolor film as the colour matrix is readily visible when the image is enlarged significantly. From the information printed on the slide mounts it would appear that this was the work of a company making kiosk and foyer furniture for the cinema industry, particularly for the Rank Organisation, since Odeon and Gaumont sites feature in the listing. There are 51 slides in the collection [there are some duplicates] including 10 Gaumont and 16 Odeon sites. The photography was listed as "Stereoscopic Photography, Alan Best (Exhibitions) Ltd, 235 Queens Road, Battersea, London SW6." There is also a reference to MAC 4334-8. An example of one of the slides is illustrated below.

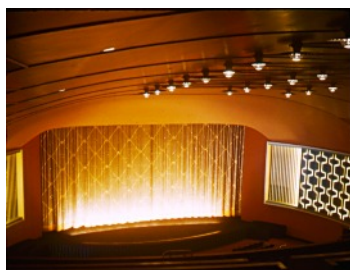
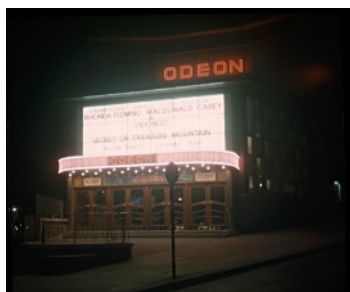


I have viewed these through a stereoscopic viewer and I have to say that the 3D effect is not great. However, they give a fascinating insight into cinema design in the mid-1950s. If any member would like to see the collection and has a means of viewing stereoscopic jpg images, I can make them available by email. [14Mb]



An example of a stereoscopic jpg image [Odeon Sheffield]

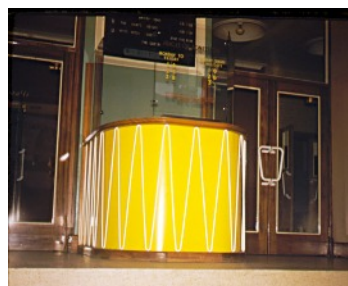
Meanwhile, here are some examples of the images as single frames; I think they are the right eye image. Others in the collection include the Majestic Hull as a ballroom, one each of Shepherds Bush, Old Kent Road, Sidcup, Bristol, Westbourne Grove and several unknown ones.



The Odeon Sheffield



Doncaster Odeon and/or Gaumont



The Gaumont Kettering



Usherette's Ice Cream Tray

Gainsborough Gaumont Foyer



Chorlton Gaumont Kiosk

Haymarket Gaumont Foyer

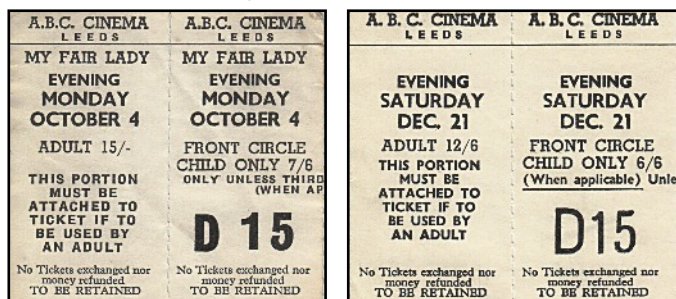


# LEEDS ROADSHOW CINEMAS

By Chris Oxley

It seems a long time since I wrote sharing my memories of the roadshow era in Leeds, supported by my collection of ticket stubs [p31 Bulletin 48/6] so I thought I would complete the story by looking at the remaining roadshow houses in the City in the 60s and early 70s.

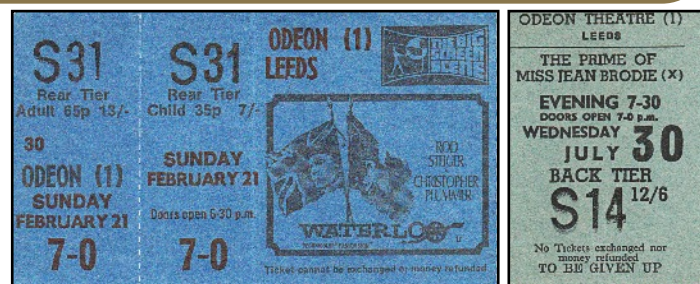
The ABC in Vicar Lane was a 1930s super cinema that had 70mm facilities installed in the late 1950s but I didn't visit this cinema until October 1965 for *My Fair Lady*. There was a large curved curtain over a standard 70mm screen. The curtain looked sufficiently curved for Cinerama and I am sure that I have read somewhere that it was planned at one time to install this process but structural difficulties with the building meant it was not possible to site the three projectors required in suitable positions. If this is true and anyone has any further information about this proposal I would be fascinated to read it. Like many ABCs that I visited in this period the stereo sound system seemed to be particularly effective. Because ABC only had one cinema in Leeds, whenever a roadshow film played there was a backlog of other releases built up. Rank on the other hand had three houses in Leeds so there was always a screen available for standard releases, even when they had two roadshow films showing in the City. This seemed to result in roadshows at the ABC having relatively shorter runs than films at the Majestic and Odeon Merriion Centre.



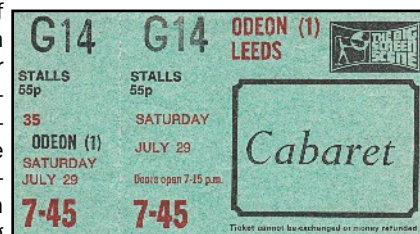
My ticket for 21 December is from 1968, purchased for a screening of the 70mm reissue of *Gone With The Wind*. As can be seen, by this date ABC had stopped printing the film title on the tickets, I always thought that this was so the tickets could still be used even if there was a late change of programme.

In May 1969 the Odeon Headrow opened as a twin theatre showing Rank's main releases and two days later the Odeon Merriion Centre closed for a Cinerama conversion with the Majestic remaining open to give Rank three screens operating in the City until the reopening of the Odeon Merriion Centre in July. Also in July the ABC closed for its own twin theatre conversion, meaning that ABC didn't have a screen in Leeds for nearly ten months. A number of their releases went to the Odeon Headrow and even to the Star-operated Plaza cinema, which was usually expected to be showing [X]-rated features of questionable merit. The ABC reopened in April 1970 with *Spring and Port Wine* in ABC ② and *Paint Your Wagon* in the larger ABC ①. My ticket for May 26 is from the run of this film. The new auditorium was impressive with a very wide curved curtain over the screen and extending down the sides of the seating area. However, I always found the 70mm screen to be rather disappointing with poor proportions and not seeming to have a great deal of width for its height. I would be interested to know what any other members might think about this aspect of the rebuilt cinema.

In the 1970s the ABC acquired a reputation for rather noisy audiences but it did manage to soldier on to the end of the Century. I don't have a record of its actual closing date [4] but all that remains is a rather large hole in the ground, masked on the street side by a large hoarding.



I have already mentioned the Odeon Headrow closing for a twin cinema conversion; when it reopened in 1969 it became Rank's main venue for new releases. The opening films were *Mackenna's Gold* in the larger Odeon ② and *Funny Girl* in Odeon ①. As already mentioned some ABC releases were shown during the first year of operation including *Mayerling* in ① and *Monte Carlo or Bust* in ②. Odeon ① had a long run of *Battle of Britain* in the autumn and *Hello Dolly* ran through the New Year period and well into 1970. My ticket for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* is from 1969 and *Cromwell* from 1970. Odeon ① kept showing roadshow releases as much as possible, such as *Waterloo* [2] in 1971 and *Cabaret* in 1972. By now the cinema was using Ranks' new style of ticket with not only the film title but also, whenever possible, a simple rendition of the poster art. However a reversion to just the title came in as the roadshow era wound down with *Man of La Mancha* being



one of the last films to be shown in this way. The cinema was tripled and then further split into five screens in the 1980s and it finally closed in October 2001 becoming, for a while, a large Primark store. The building still stands as retail units on the corner of The Headrow and Briggate but unless you know it is difficult to tell from the street that this was once a very large City centre cinema.



Finally the Classic in City Square, which was built into the basement of the Queens Hotel when the LMS remodelled the old Midland Railway Wellington station in the 1930s. This had resulted in a fine Art Deco frontage to City Square. The small cinema was opened as a News Cinema but in the 1960s it was taken over by Classic. My ticket from September 1968 was for a showing of *Doctor Zhivago*. The cinema was small but comfortable with plenty of legroom and seats a bit like armchairs. It became a film club in 1969 and closed in the 1970s. However, in 1977 it reopened for a short time in conjunction with Leeds Music Festival operating as *The Screen in the Square* and showing films with musical merit. I managed to see *Henry V* there and it seemed to be a popular but short-lived experiment.

I hope members have found items of interest in my ramblings about this period in Leeds' cinema history and I welcome any additions and corrections that members may wish to contribute.

## Editor's Notes:

1. Cinema Treasures gives the closing date of the ABC Leeds as 17 February 2000. {14394}
2. I have a note that *Waterloo* only played in 70mm in London and that provincial cinemas were fobbed off with a 35mm copy.
3. Other Cinema Treasures References: Majestic {2718}; Odeon Merriion Centre {3151}; Odeon Headrow {1717}; Plaza {24955}; Classic {2721}. See also p8.

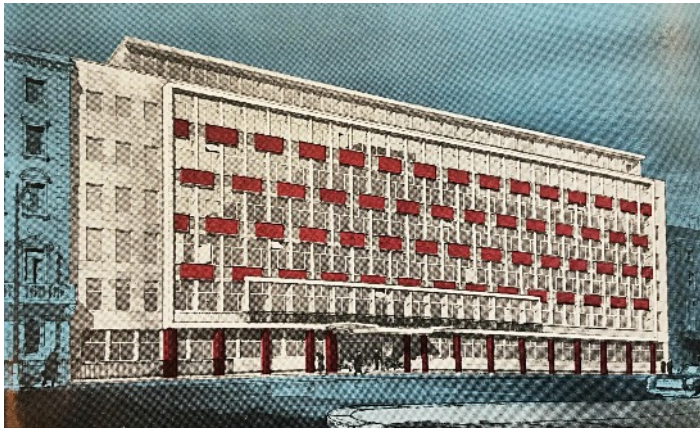




# JARO 1956 – THE J ARTHUR RANK ORGANISATION

By Ben Doman

In February 1956, *The Cinema* trade magazine published a book to celebrate the opening of The Rank Organisation's new headquarters in Belgravia, London. This lavish hardback publication, covered with fine silk and carrying a gold embossed 'man with the gong' logo, also listed the activities of all parts of the organisation.



Designed by TP Bennett & Son and built by Sir Robert McAlpine, the new headquarters were situated between Belgrave Road and Guildhouse Street, in Eccleston Square, Victoria. Much was made of the planning and attention to detail to produce a design that was flexible, easy to maintain and practical. The building, comprising of reinforced concrete, had a columned ground floor Portland stone elevation on Belgrave Road with five floors of windowed offices, punctuated with brick panels, above. The frontage was topped with a sixth floor of continuous windows overlooking the square. The plan was of a 'T' shape, the 'T' extending to the rear onto Guildhouse Street. There was 80,000 square feet of office space, 1,650 square feet set aside for viewing theatres and projection rooms, 4,700 square feet for canteen, kitchen and subsidiary rooms and 1,800 square feet of general storage.

The entrance is described "...the external lobby has a marble floor of Genoa Green and Trani marbles in alternating squares and Bianco del Mare marble wall linings to which is affixed, on each side, the well-known "Man with the Gong" sign carried out in bronze. Two pairs of bronze and plate-glass doors lead on to the entrance hall, which has been elaborated with the use of a marble floor in alternating squares of Genoa Green and Trani marbles and wall-panelled with Indian laurel veneered flush panelling... The ceiling is formed with a fibrous plaster surround filled with cast plaster tiles, perforated and backed with glass silk as acoustic correction or incorporating recessed light fittings. Lifts and the main staircase discharge at each floor level into lift lobbies from which the three-way main corridors radiate. They are decorated in harmonising shades of red and blue and floored with heavy duty linoleum."

There were two viewing theatres in the basement, served by a central projection room and fitted with two pairs of 35mm projectors and a 16mm projector and fitted with motorised tabs and masking. The 35mm projectors are described as "manufactured within the organisation", so would have been Kalee machines, built in Leeds. Also in the basement was a self-service canteen, kitchen and GPO telephone switch room. A medical room was situated on the second floor, complete with two consulting rooms, treatment and rest rooms. Due to the use of acoustic ceilings, partitions in the office space were only seven feet high and could be reconfigured to suit. A separate building at the rear housed a rest room for visiting chauffeurs, rooms for the telephone operators, a film store and boiler house.



Amongst the list of film output for the year are articles on *A Town Like Alice*, *An Alligator Named Daisy*, *The Ladykillers*, *Reach For The Sky* and *The Battle Of The River Plate*, complete with lavish fold-out colour pictures from the films.

In discussion of the United Kingdom Base of Odeon and Gaumont cinemas, the importance of proper training of the managers was set out. "...we have set out to produce showmen in every sense of the word – men who can achieve a correct balance between exploitation, maintenance, presentation and staff control, all of which adds up to a good operation. For six months, men, after most careful selection, are taken on as trainees. They follow a prearranged training syllabus under the most competent managers available. This is followed by a month in a special training establishment in London, which has as its objective, not only instruction and the 'rounding off' of the training period but also... the bringing together of head office and



## JOHN GREGSON, ANTHONY QUAYLE THE BATTLE OF THE RIVER PLATE

PETER FINCH as Captain Langford. A Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger production. Screenplay by Emeric Pressburger. Music by Emeric Pressburger. Produced by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger.

From the VistaVision and Technicolor by the award-winning team, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. The Battle of the River Plate shows the first big naval action of the second world war.

It was six days before the declaration of war in September, 1939, that the German pocket battleship, "Graf Spee" sailed from Germany under strict orders. In the vast waters of the South Atlantic she rambled. For months she preyed on Britain's vital lifeline of merchant shipping, with devastating results.

Then early in December, 1939, the Navy picked up a message giving the position of the liner "Dons Star" - still under attack. With masterly strategy Commander Harwood based a plan of attack on the water by the cruisers "Exeter" and "Ajax" and the New Zealand ship "Achilles". He calculated that "Graf Spee" would make for the River Plate and reach there by dawn on December 13th.

And he was right. Out-gunned and out-manned the British ships attacked with a bravery that inspired during the building and forced her to fly to the safety of Montevideo Harbour.

Four days later an exhausted world heard the

news that the German captain had scuttled his ship after his time limit for staying in Uruguayan waters had expired.

The difficult role of the German Captain Langford, whose behaviour was so admired by all fighting men, German and British, is played with masterly skill by Peter Finch. His portrayal of this cold-blooded yet human seaman who thought his ship invulnerable is a brilliant performance.

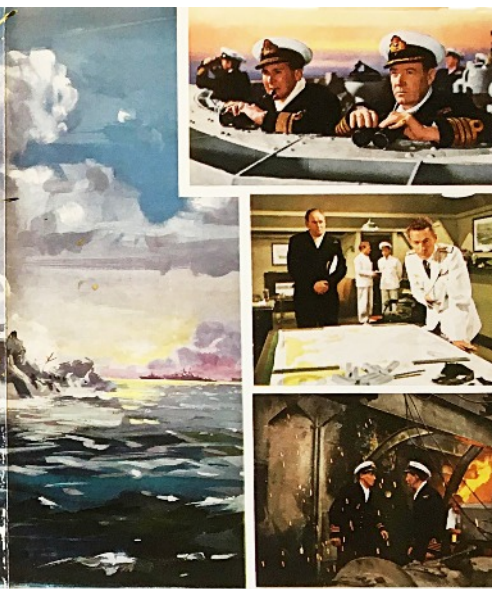
As Captain Bell of the immortal "Exeter," John Gregson brings to the screen that vital personality which has made him such a box-office favourite.

Anthony Quayle is Commander Harwood, the man who springs the cunning trap and out-maneuvres the German raider. To collect authentic material for this powerful film Powell and Pressburger spent eighteen months and travelled thousands of miles, sitting and watching. This intense realism Harwood's widow, delved through secret Admiralty records and talked with the men who witnessed and took part in the action.

All this has been translated into a tense story of suspense and action in the tracking and killing of the battleship, and makes the film not just an unforgettable film.



Undoubtedly the most exciting story of war at sea yet filmed, taking as its location hal, the world







J Arthur Rank

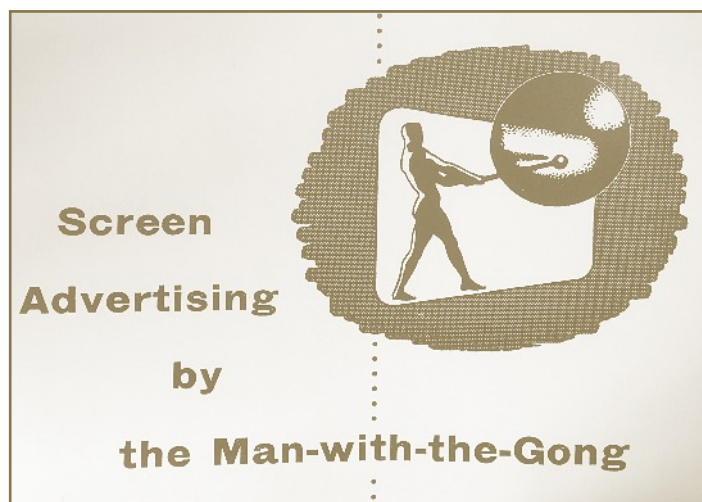


JW Davis

theatres at the earliest possible stage..." Managers were then rotated regularly around the organisation's 560 UK theatres to gain experience. There seems to have been little thought to equal opportunities for ladies mentioned!

Rank was keen to have an outlet for its films throughout the British Empire. There were subsidiaries in countries across the globe, with interests in 133 cinemas in Australia (Greater Union Theatres), 22 in Ceylon, 19 in Eire, 12 in Northern Ireland, 18 in Holland, 17 in Malaya, 1 in Portugal, 119 in New Zealand (Kerridge Organisation), 124 in South Africa, 15 in the West Indies and 105 in Canada.

With the opening of the new headquarters, Universal and GB News moved to the JARFID (J Arthur Rank Film Distributors) premises at 127 Wardour Street, where radio aerials were installed on the roof providing instant two-way communication to the newsreel cars around the country. Newsreels were edited and printed at Ranks' studios at Denham, with a separate Universal Irish reel produced for Eire. One-off new specials, such as *A Queen Is Crowned*, were produced by JARFID.



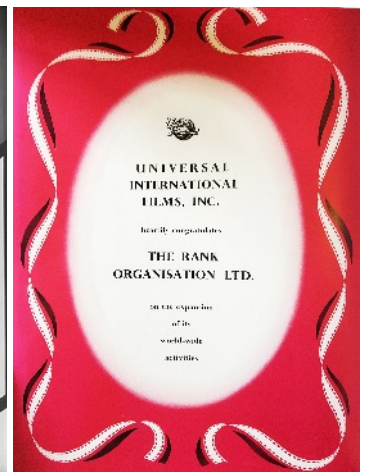
Advertising was taken care of via J Arthur Rank Screen Services (JARSS), bringing together Langfords (established in 1912), Theatre Publicity (responsible for acquiring screen rights, sales to local advertisers and all theatrical distribution), Gaumont Specialised Film Unit and Screen Audiences (dealing with the production of all screen advertising, documentaries, training and service films) under one roof at Pinewood Studios. The series *Tips*, with a circulation of over six thousand per week, was joined by a new series called *Shop*.



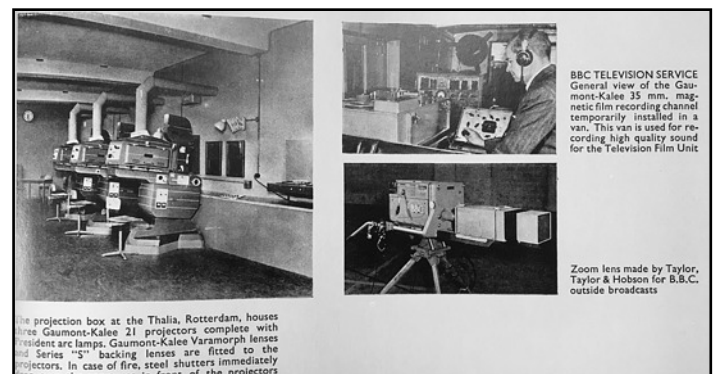
Peter Butterworth and Jerry Desmond are seen in the Capstan section of "Tips" No. 44 dealing with home decorating.



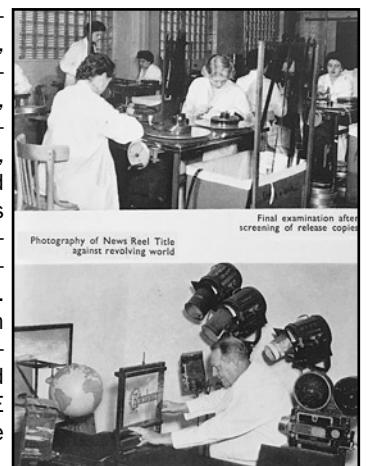
Hazel Court commences the first two editions of the new magazine film "Shop", seen here in an Ovaltine insert from edition two.



Another advance was Theatre Publicity's introduction of live action filmlets for local advertisers. "In place of stock library backgrounds with the traders' name and address... TP offers a range of live action backgrounds using real people and places. It gives his advertising an appeal to rival the fine national efforts – and improves the presentation of the filmlet reel as a whole."



Continuing Rank's vertical integration of the film industry was BOPE, British Optical & Precision Engineers Ltd. Via A Kershaw & Sons, Taylor, Taylor & Hobson Ltd (precision lens optics), GB-Kalee Ltd, Harkness Ltd (screen systems and drapes) and British Acoustic films (sound reproducers) they produced projectors, sound equipment, screens, drapes and seats. GB-Bell & Howell produced 16mm projectors and 8mm cine cameras. Visual Aids manufactured 16mm film strip projectors. BOPE sold these products across the world.



Over at Denham Studios others worked whilst the rest of the industry slept. In 1956 4,000,000 feet of film were being processed every week, with negatives coming in from all over the world. The studios even had their own Bonded Store and Customs Station, complete with resident Customs Officers. The labs had the largest black & white processing capacity in Europe and specialised in colour printing, mixing the chemicals on the spot for Eastman Colour, Ferraniacolor and Gevacolor prints. 16mm and 8mm film was also processed here. Each foot of film was inspected before being released. "For this purpose, special viewing theatres are in constant operation. Each small theatre has two adjoining screens and, in the interest of speed, two films are projected side by side at the same time. Even after the viewers have passed a copy, it is examined inch by inch by a white-gloved staff of men and women skilled in this sensitive task."

It was later in the year that Rank's second in command, John Davis, met with the Haloid Company in the States and set up Rank Xerox, thus starting the organisation's diversification from film. In 2017 the new headquarters building is still standing and is listed as the home of The Pensions Advisory Service. Denham Studios is now a housing development, although Pinewood is still going strong.



# ABANDONED CINEMAS

By Gavin McGrath

In this article it is time to look behind closed doors at the cinemas that have lain derelict awaiting their final outcome. The dusty seats, the ripped screens, the plaster-covered floors and the ghostly atmosphere all mark a really sad loss to places of former glory.



The Odeon in Cambridge Street Aylesbury opened in June 1937 and was one of a number of houses designed for the circuit by Andrew Mather. The 1,451-seater was tripled in August 1973 when two smaller screens were created in the rear stalls area. Its days were numbered following the arrival of the ABC multiplex cinema elsewhere in the town and it closed in October 1999. Sainsbury's Supermarkets purchased the building in the hope of building a new store on the site but, despite being given planning permission, it ended up in the hands of Churchill Homes who announced they would build retirement flats on the plot. Either way, demolition of the cinema was inevitable and the bulldozers finally arrived in March 2017, almost a year behind schedule. The above picture featuring the foyer was taken in September 2015.



The Vue cinema on the Park 66 development just outside Bury was opened as a Warner in June 1989 by Liza Minnelli on what was then Pilsforth Industrial Estate. The twelve-screen multiplex, designed by the Brian Clancy Partnership, was the first for the company in the UK and was rebranded Warner Village in the mid-1990s following a substantial facelift. It became a Vue in 2004 and closed in July 2010 when the company relocated to the town centre. The 3,950-seater lay abandoned until April 2016 when the bulldozers moved in. The rest of the site was also cleared including the Megabowl, which closed in March 2012. A planning application was submitted to the Council in December 2016 for a mixed-use development to include light industrial units and retail space, including a supermarket and drive-through restaurant. The above picture was taken in December 2014.



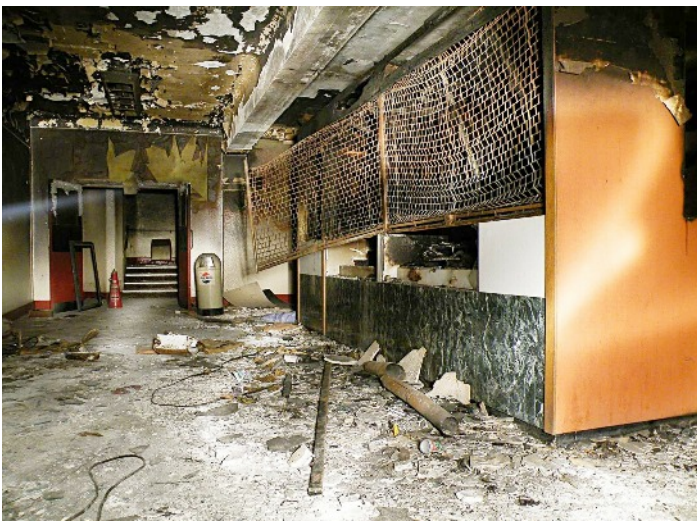
The Robins Cinema on London Road in Camberley started life as the Regal opening in August 1932. It was designed by Harold Seymour Scott and was operated by the County Cinemas chain. It was taken over by the Odeon circuit and renamed in the mid-1940s but sold to Classic in 1967 and renamed Classic. The company tripled the cinema in October 1975 at a cost of £90,000, although the Vogue Bingo Club was not affected by the change. It became a Cannon following the takeover and was set to close in February 1994 when owners MGM gave notice to staff. It was rescued however at the last minute and kept open by the Robins independent chain. The doors were eventually closed in May 2003 when the landlord received a better offer and the Sovereign Snooker Club was left as sole tenant before moving out two years later. A proposal for a lap dancing club in 2004 was met with opposition from a nearby mosque. Two fires at the building in 2006 and 2009 left the structure in bad shape and it was demolished as a result in 2013. The site is now occupied by flats.



The Odeon on The High (now West Square) in Harlow, was designed by TP Bennett & Son and opened in February 1960. The 1,244-seater originally had a stepped section at the back of the auditorium rather than a conventional balcony and became a three-screen cinema when tripled in 1987. It closed in August 2005 and despite being sold off still remains empty. It replaced the Regal, a temporary cinema built in 1952, which Rank purchased to get the advantage of the new location. The above picture is believed to feature Screen ②.

Cinema/Screen title "programme" alterations to name programme		
Sunday, January 3rd—7 days Clive Ford    Debbie Reynolds <b>IT STARTED WITH A KISS</b> Colour and Cinemascope	Sunday, January 17th—7 days Norman Wisdom <b>FOLLOW A STAR</b>	Sunday, January 31st—7 days John Wayne    William Holden <b>THE HORSE SOLDIERS</b> Colour by De Luxe
Mickey Rooney    Steve Cochran    Marie Van Doren <b>The Big Operator</b>	Geoffrey Hearn    Jane Hylton    Gordon Jackson <b>Devil's Bait</b>	Sell the Atlantic with the adventures of the sea! <b>Lifeline</b> Eastman Colour
Sunday, January 10th—11 days Donna Kaye <b>THE FIVE PENNIES</b> Technicolor	Sunday, January 24th—7 days Gory Cooper    Rita Hayworth    Van Heflin <b>THEY CAME TO CORDURA</b> Technicolor    Cinemascope	<b>THIS IS A THEATRE WITHIN THE RANK ORGANISATION</b>
"Purple and Pinks" Series Wall-to-Wall <b>The Ama Girls</b> Technicolor    Cinemascope	<b>Senior Prom</b> Louis Prima    Kenny Smith    Mirth Miller Carmen Cramer    Bob Crosby    Tami Ardon My Martin and His Orchestra	





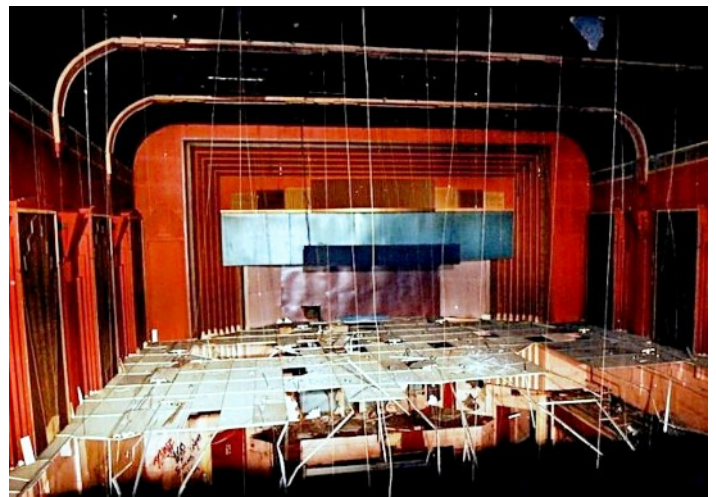
The Albert Ernest Shennan-designed **Carlton** in the Liverpool suburb of Tue Brook looks more like a sandcastle than a cinema. It opened in June 1932, was renamed **ABC** in December 1962 and was modernised in 1972 when the rear stalls were converted to a Painted Wagon pub; the cinema was then confined to the balcony. In July 1980 an independent operator took over the cinema and ran it as the **Carlton** again until closure in December 1982. It has remained unused ever since, apart from being home to a pub called The Lord Derby via the entrance on West Derby Road but this has been closed since at least 2008. It then made the news in November 2010 when the dead body of a man was found inside. It has been publicised that demolition of the building was imminent for a number of years now, to make way for housing and retail outlets but it is still standing at the time of writing. The above picture was taken in November 2009.



The **Odeon** on London Road in the North End area of Portsmouth opened in December 1936 and was another in the chain designed by Andrew Mather. The façade has an instantly recognisable tower with cream faience and green vertical stripes and is topped with red tiles. The auditorium, originally with 1,824 seats in stalls and balcony, was tripled in August 1973 and a fourth screen was added in 1990 in the front stalls. The cinema closed in January 2008 having been sold off by the company. Sainsbury's has occupied the former foyer area with one of its 'Locals' since 2013 but the screens remain unused. Urban explorers have revealed that water has penetrated the building and that some flooding has occurred in two of the screens as a result. The picture above is believed to be of Screen ②. The owners have submitted at least two proposals, most recently in March 2017, to have the auditorium demolished and replaced with new homes. It is understood that the Sainsbury's Local in the foyer area will not be affected. The picture above was taken in September 2009.

**Photos courtesy of:** Harry Seager (Odeon Aylesbury); fragglehunter (Vue); Large Pig (Robins); Jazzy D (Odeon Harlow); George Toohey (Carlton); Adam Slater (Odeon Portsmouth); phill.d (Glenroyal and Regal).

More abandoned cinemas are featured in detail at the following websites: [www.28dayslater.co.uk] and [www.derelictplaces.co.uk].



The **Glenroyal** on Briggate in Shipley [near Bradford, West Yorks] opened in September 1932 and was part of the AS Hyde circuit along with its namesake in Horsforth. It was designed by Ernest H Dawson and faced with rustic bricks and cream terracotta. The cinema closed in December 1962 and was converted to the Glen Casino, which opened in January 1963, by the then owners Star. It was EMI Bingo by 1974 and initially closed in 1982. It was reopened by Walkers and taken over by King's Leisure in 1990 becoming King's Bingo. This closed in January 2005 and the building lay derelict until gutted by fire one night in January 2013. Such was the damage caused the decision was made to demolish the building the following day. The suspended ceiling to segregate the stalls from the balcony can easily be seen in the above picture, although it had been left in severe tatters. Proposals for an apartment block on the site were unveiled in October 2007 with another for a mixed-use development in October 2015 but the site remained vacant as of September 2016.



The **Regal** on Kirkgate in Wakefield is more famous as an abandoned cinema that it was as an operating cinema and has been visited several times by urban explorers. The 1,590-seater was designed by ABC's in-house architect WR Glen and opened in December 1935. It was renamed **ABC** in the early 1960s and was tripled in November 1976 when two screens were created in the rear stalls. It was renamed **Cannon** following the takeover and closed in 1997 following the opening of the **Cineplex**. It has remained empty ever since due to a covenant having been placed on it. The picture, from December 2007, shows Screen ① from the top of the circle but what can't be seen is that the area in front of the stage has become waterlogged. A scheme to convert the former cinema into flats, shops and a rooftop garden was approved in 2009 but never went ahead and a further proposal submitted in December 2013 involved demolishing the building and replacing it with an apartment block. A return to films however is unlikely as it was announced in October 2016 that The Light chain of cinemas are planning a nine-screen multiplex adjacent to the Market Hall and Trinity Walk Shopping Centre. The Friends of ABC/Regal/Cannon Cinema Wakefield are hoping to keep memories of the cinema alive and have a very good page on the social media site Facebook.





# THE BIRKS CINEMA ABERFELDY

By John West

The Birks Cinema opened on 3 July 1939 in The Square of Aberfeldy [Perth & Kinross], built by Strathmore Picture Houses Ltd. It replaced three old houses that were demolished; the whole building process took less than six months from approval to opening!

The cinema was clearly much enjoyed by the town for many decades before it closed its doors as a cinema in 1982. It then spent some years as an amusement arcade – that too finally closing in 2004. It became dilapidated and needed much funding to bring it up to a usable standard.



A small group of Aberfeldy film-obsessed and cinema-deprived local residents at the local Heartland Film Society AGM, raised the question, "Could the Birks Cinema be a viable cinema again?" Contacting other community cinemas in the UK revealed that there was a cinema expert called Ron Inglis, based in Scotland, who should be able to help them answer that question. Perth and Kinross Rural Economic Development helped pay for Ron to carry out an initial feasibility study and they fully expected him to come back with an unreserved "No, not really" and they abandon the project. However, with his extensive knowledge of the independent cinema world, Ron said that he thought that, given modern digital technology, it meant that not only did a business not have to support a projection room team but also that it was easier for a small cinema to present a varied programme and even get release films early on, it would be possible to create a viable cinema venue – even in a smallish rural community. He confirmed all that they thought a cinema would bring to a community – cross generational entertainment and social inclusion, a sense of pride of place, positive economic improvement. So, having expected a reasoned 'No, not really viable' the promoters felt able to proceed.

At this stage Friends of the Birks Cinema [FotBC] was a small constituted local group, with a committee of six or seven and list of 30 or so interested people. They were extremely fortunate to receive a donation from a private trust that enabled us to fund work by a local architect, Robin Baker, to explore how the building could be converted. With these plans and Ron's report they were able to support an application to the Big Lottery Investing in Ideas in 2008 for further funds to enable the



architect to obtain planning permission for the project, as well as pay for further work from Ron Inglis to develop a Business Plan for the cinema. They created the Friends membership scheme to formalise that list of interested people as well as to develop a small pot of petty cash to cover expenses. With all this information in hand they knew

that they were looking at a project worth £1.8 million to purchase the building, renovate and equip it to open for business. In June 2009, they put in an application to the Scottish Government's Town Centre Regeneration Fund – a one-off pot of money aimed at revitalising small rural towns. The successful application of £325,000 enabled them to buy the building in November 2009, pay for initial work to make it weatherproof and safe (removal of asbestos, mercury and lead paint!) and fund the architect's team to develop the plans to building tender stage. To be in a position to apply for these funds as an organisation, they had to have a clear legal identity and so in June 2009 became a company limited by guarantee. They registered it as a charity later that year as well. Both were important changes to enable them to continue with fundraising.



Over all this time they had loads of conversations – with other community organisations in the area and with Community Councils throughout Highland Perthshire. They carried out a street survey on cinema-going within the community and a more formal community needs assessment throughout Highland Perthshire and Killin. They held stands at community events in the area, shared their plans with local businesses and individuals, constantly kept a dialogue going about the project, how it could meet different needs within the community, how it could work best. Once they had bought the building and made it safe, they were able to invite people in every Saturday to have a look, share their plans and have some souvenir products for sale to help raise funds as well as awareness. In September 2009 they were delighted to hear that Alan Cumming had agreed to be their Patron.

By mid-2010 they knew how much money they would need to raise to cover the building renovations and equip the building. They submitted an application to SRDP for £658,000 and in March 2011 heard that this had been awarded. They had until 31 January 2012 to raise the matching £700,000 to be able to draw down the award. The fundraising campaign was ramped up – they wrote to small private trusts, they applied to large local trusts as well as arts trusts and funds and they made applications to various public pots of money – Creative Scotland, the local Windfarm Community Fund and the Big Lottery. They held a series of large fundraising events in the autumn of 2012. Right up to the wire in January 2012 they were waiting to hear if their application to BLF was successful and it felt like a cliff-hanger last act, as SRDP agreed to extend the 31 January deadline by a day or two to accommodate a final decision by Big Lottery. They had prepared low-budget alternatives to accommodate a slightly reduced funding pot if this application was not successful but in the event this was not needed – they reached and exceeded the £1.4m target, with the £550,000 award from Big Lottery. In addition to funds needed for the renovation, they also awarded revenue funds for 3 years to ensure that there was some support in place for the early years of the new business.







Having already gone to tender for building contractors, they were immediately able to appoint Hadden Construction to begin the renovations. They moved on site in May 2012 and aimed to be finished by mid-February 2013. On the whole the building process went well – with very few delays – however it became clear at the end of December 2012 that completion would be delayed a month and the completed project was handed over to FotBC by mid-March.

FotBC realised that managing the whole building project and handling the funding side would require additional resources – and they applied to LEADER for funds to help to manage financial administration. This enabled them to take on a part-time finance administrator and an office – both invaluable in managing the whole project. They also had a volunteer Project Manager, Kevin Ramage from the community.

In addition to the physical resource of the building they needed to decide how they were going to run the cinema business itself. They sought various channels of advice on this and FotBC agreed at an EGM in April 2012 to create a trading company The Birks Cinema Ltd to run the business for FotBC. This was established in June 2012, with nine appointed Directors drawn from across Highland Perthshire. In December 2012 they appointed the General Manager for the cinema, Paul Foley, who has had four months to develop the new business, recruit staff, develop the programme and everything else needed to get the cinema open and ready for business in mid-April 2013.

The Birks Cinema is now an amazing rural cinema showing the latest films; a spacious 100-seat auditorium, comfy seats, state of the art projection and sound. Owned by the community, the Birks is a must-visit venue to see a film, relax over coffee and cake and a great venue for special events.

*Exterior photos by the author; interiors courtesy Hadden Construction*

## 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.



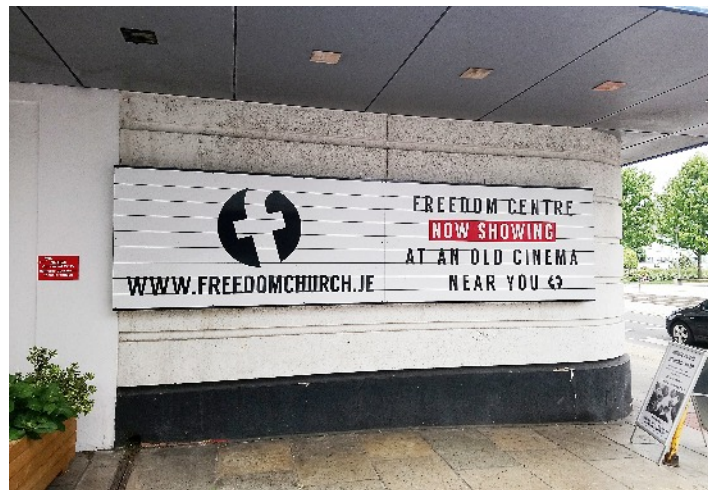
This is a redesigned and much enlarged third edition of a book not available for more than 20 years, fully updated by its original author, Allen Eyles. It is a complete record of all the cinemas that have entertained picture-goers in the West End from 1906 to 2013. There are maps, appendices of club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

Published in collaboration with English Heritage.

## HOLIDAY SNAPS



Roger Fox caught this image on his way to Birmingham's New Street station. The façade of the station is a giant version of the fairground distorting mirror attraction and certainly produces a bewildering effect. Spot where the real Odeon stops and the reflection starts.



David Profit from South Shields admired the sign for the Freedom Church outside the former Jersey Odeon

## MEMBERS' COLUMN

A new feature where members can contact each other about all matters cinema-related.



In the 1930s a series of farces were performed at the Aldwych Theatre in London and were later filmed starring Tom Walls and Ralph Lynn etc. If any CTA members share my enthusiasm in seeing them, I would like them to email me at [joyce.braddon@talktalk.net] when we could correspond and possibly see the films together.



Sent in by Joyce Braddon

Sydney L. Bernstein is one of Britain's most prominent exhibitors and the creator of the "Granada" Kinemas. He was one of the founders of the Film Society.

**M**Y particular job is to provide suitable screen entertainment for the 250,000 people who every week attend the kinemas with which I am associated.

Because British films occupy an increasingly prominent place in our programmes the degree of success I achieve depends on the quality of the productions from home studios.

Even before Quota days I was agitating for the establishment of a picture-making community in this country which would eventually secure for British kinemas a new source of supply of pictures reflecting our national temperament.

I have always been anxious to show British films, but I have been made to realise that the fact that a film is made in England is no guarantee that it will succeed; as a showman bearing the responsibility of entertaining the public I know that patriotism is not enough.

You, the public, have the last word in everything. You have the power to check the careers of film stars; to wreck Hollywood's finances, even to put Elstree out of action. On the other hand you can wave a wand that brings prosperity to all engaged in providing you with entertainment.

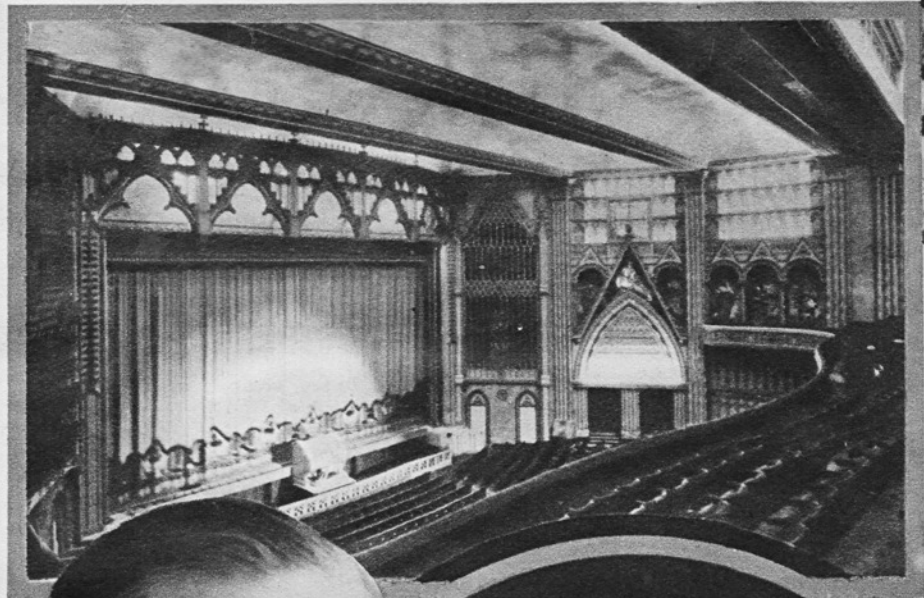
By sitting by your fireside at night instead of going to the pictures, you definitely play an important part in the shaping of balance sheets way out there in Hollywood or here in British studios. This power you possess, whether you realise it or not. Certain critics in an excess of patriotic fervour try to spread the impression that all British films automatically prove triumphant. It is not so. I wish it were.

Your attitude to British films is no less critical than your attitude to the imported product. Every picture offered these days, whether it be made by North Pole Eskimos or Patagonian cannibals, is better for being subjected to the same exacting standards of criticism. To pardon bad British pictures is to injure the good.

I find that however well a talkie may draw on Monday, if it does not meet with approval that day, then unoccupied seats will form the main part of its audience throughout the rest of the week. And what is more, the drawing powers of the stars appearing in such a failure will suffer a falling off when their next film arrives.

Comedy pictures like *Turkey Time*, *Jack Ahoy*, *Aunt Sally*, and even Gracie Fields epics have made Hollywood reflect and consider and have definitely kept from the American companies millions in revenue that would have accrued to them from their own productions.

In the field of drama, British producers are left far behind. True, *Rome Express*, *The Private Life of Henry the Eighth* (was



A recent portrait of the author and above, the interior of his Granada, Tooting.

"YOU,  
the PUBLIC,  
have the LAST  
WORD,"  
says Sydney  
BERNSTEIN

that great picture a drama?) and a few other productions have achieved outstanding popularity and praise, but the majority of excursions into realism are marked by an ineptitude which causes an ominous quiet to descend on the box office.

British dramas seem incapable of capturing the realism of the Hollywood product. They are all so patently make-believe, so slow, so tedious that long before the end the audience has ceased to care whether the hero and heroine live happily ever after or shoot each other.

The fault largely lies in the choice of stories. Making pictures from original stories or novels offering abundant opportunities for action is a rare thing in British studios.

British producers are far too fond of buying up stage plays and transplanting them *en bloc* to the screen. They seem incapable of grasping the fact that the screen is an entirely different form of dramatic expression from the stage; that a stage production is limited by the "pros-

cenium," whereas the screen is a boundless canvas on which anything can be painted.

Let me put it this way: From the point of view of spectacle and action the screen begins where the stage leaves off; therefore a successful talkie may be defined as something which the limitations of the stage forbid.

The failure to develop British film stars is an important factor which prevents our pictures achieving maximum success at the box office. Leave out the comedy stars, and it is difficult to mention a name likely to keep a theatre busy.

Particular significance attaches to the fact that all the big personalities in British films are importations from the stage. Tom Walls, Ralph Lynn, Cecily Courtneidge, and Gordon Harker were public figures long before the coming of talkies, which merely introduced them to a wider public, and thus enhanced their popularity.

But practically nothing has been done to create stars in the field of drama, and without stars the glamour disappears from





*You can bring prosperity to all engaged in the industry.*

*The imposing exterior of a modern kinema, the Granada, Tooting.*

most films, for cinemagoers are more interested in personalities than ever before, and it is to see their favourites that they go to the pictures—so long as they are satisfied that the film on view is worthy of patronage.

It is in the realm of comedy that British films achieve their greatest success and Hollywood commits one of its major faults. The Americans make comedies designed to appeal to the youth of their big cities who demand wisecracks, slangy blondes, hidebound brunettes and red-hot mommas. Because two nations never share the same sense of humour, British audiences are apt to yawn in the face of such screen fare, and turn gladly to the "hearty fun" in which Elstree and Shepherd's Bush specialise.

Sometimes we Marx Brothers fans deplore this, but then the box office is our master. British screen humour may be too broad and knock-about for the fastidious, but fortunately the majority of cinema patrons are not fastidious. They go to the pictures after a hard day's work, and the excuses for laughter they want must be simple and easily digested. And rightly so. Keeping abreast of American wisecracks fired off at the rate of ten a minute can never be the most restful form of recreation.

While I feel that British comedy pictures will always remain supreme in this country, I regret there is a temptation to concentrate on this form of production while presenting Hollywood with the monopoly of drama and spectacle. Maybe this is an admirable safety-first policy, but it precludes progress and the proper development of the British film-producing industry.

But for all this, some of our producers have tried and succeeded. They have made great films and those films have been British. When I see a picture at a trade show, I say: "Is it good?" not "Where was it made?" And because to-day so many good films are British, twenty-five per cent. of my programmes for the rest of the year will be British, although the Quota law demands only fifteen per cent.

My attitude is also your attitude.

You are a tough, unmerciful crowd. You know what you want. We think we give it you, but when we blunder it's either jig-saw puzzles or the B.B.C. for you, and heartaches and empty seats for us.





# HAPPENINGS IN HALIFAX

By Peter Berry

Just a few lines to let you know what's been happening to the former Regal (ABC) Halifax and its makeover of the foyer and outside areas. Just to recap on the building itself, as it is grade II listed the interior fabric of the building was carefully protected in 2002 when turned into a nightclub. The whole stalls area was boxed in away from the original walls and a separate ceiling was added (not suspended from above) as to protect the WR Glen original.

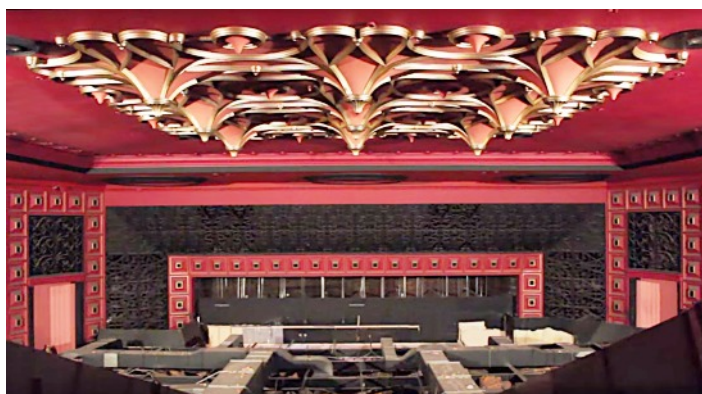


Over the last few months the owners have made a new entrance to the nightclub at the right hand side of the main doors, which was originally the exits from the stalls and circle foyer, thus leaving the main foyer empty. Work started to bring the main foyer back to 1930s spec. All the false walls that were created in the 1976 tripling along with the false ceiling have been removed. This has now exposed both dual staircases to the circle foyer, including a spectacular original ceiling. At the same time the main doors and old read-o-graph were taken down along with false tiling that was put there in 1976. This meant the building was looking at its worst. [above]

During the next few weeks decorators moved into the former foyer areas and really brought it back to life, installing chrome rails onto both staircases and using a light blue with detail picked out in gold for the ceiling and re-introducing three magnificent replacement chandeliers, which look over the 1930s foyer.

The ground floor space has been turned into an expensive cocktail bar [R] with high class furniture, which complements the rest of revamp.

There is a bar at the end of the foyer, which blocks access to the nightclub for the general public. The circle itself is still untouched and fully seated, hidden from view of the nightclub in the stalls. The outside also had a makeover with a new working read-o-graph being installed plus new windows and doors all across the front – a vast improvement and well worth a look if you are in Halifax.



The ceiling and top half of the proscenium at the Regal/ABC Halifax viewed from the sealed-off circle



The Theatre Royal / Essoldo Halifax in July 2006

Not so good news is that of the Theatre Royal, opened in 1905 as a theatre under the ownership of Northern Theatres and later becoming their head office. In 1932 the theatre interior was replaced with a 30s art deco interior to compete with the style of the day. In 1957 Essoldo purchased all Northern Theatre properties. The building had been running on film since the 1920s but in the 60s Essoldo gave it a makeover and turned it into an Essoldo bingo, passing to Ladbroke's then Top Rank. When bingo faded it closed and was sold off as nightclub. A lot of the interior was destroyed at this point in the conversion. By 2004 the building was put up for sale with the closure of the club. Eventually the building was put up for auction but did not sell. It was then put up for sale in 2010. In 2012 a 'sold' sign appeared but still nothing has happened to this day. Although the building seems secure, the only things that have occupied it are weeds and a tree, which appears to be growing out of a side wall. I wonder who the mystery buyer is or was?

## 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](mailto:contact@ppttrust.org)

[www.ppttrust.org](http://www.ppttrust.org)



# THE PICTURE PLAYHOUSE BEXHILL

## By Wilf Watters

The former Picture Playhouse reopened as a Wetherspoons pub on 18 July. They gave out tickets for a free meal and drink to test the staff – I got one of these and attended.

The building opened on 8 July 1921 as the Picture Playhouse with 800 seats. It was built adjacent to the Cinema de Luxe and was operated by Randolph E Richards (the Cinema de Luxe was closed in February 1924 and became a garage). The entire day's takings were donated to the Bexhill Centre of the British Red Cross. Prices ranged from 1/- to 3/- and all films back in that era were accompanied by the full-time Picture Playhouse Orchestra. Its telephone number (Bexhill 78) would survive right up until 1995 as 210078. The number had been used by the Cinema De Luxe next door since 1913.

In 1966 it was taken over by the Classic Cinemas chain and was re-named Classic. Upon the retirement of Classic Cinemas' chairman Eric Rhodes, he was 'given' the Classic to operate and he renamed it Curzon Picture Playhouse. The building was twinned, with a bingo hall in the former stalls area and a small 300-seat cinema in the former circle. It was closed in June 1988.

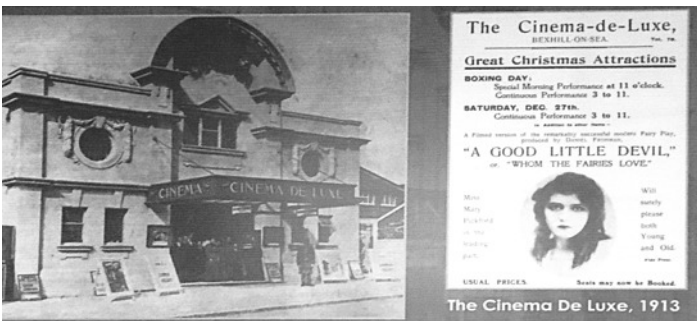
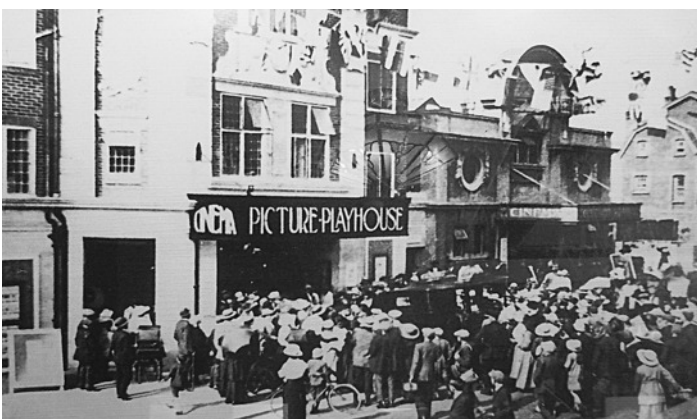
Then came a period of openings and closings under different managements 1989 - January 1991 (indoor market below), May 1991 - April 1994, February 1995 - October 2004, when it finally closed as a cinema.

The theatre was last operated as the Redstack Playhouse, which hosted films and live entertainment; this closed in March 2008.

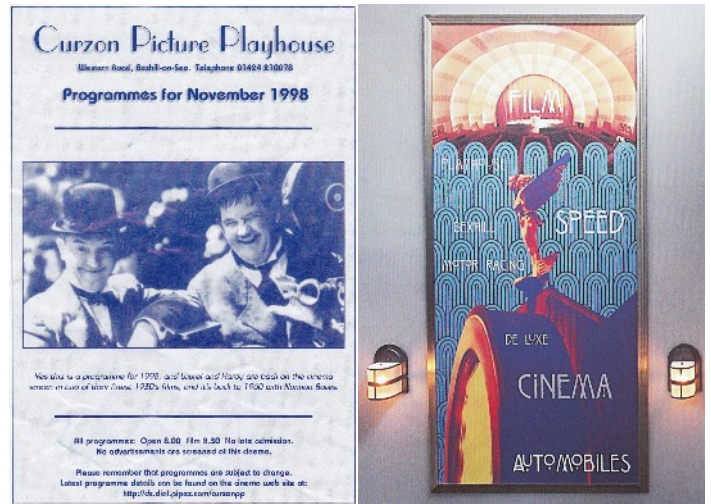
*Photos by the author; additional material from Cinema Treasures and Bexhill Observer*



Handing out food vouchers at the extension entrance



Photographs of old pictures displayed in the pub



More photos of pictures displayed in the pub



The new Wetherspoons just before opening



The wonderful carpet throughout – very 'Odeon-esque'



Pity about the ugly girder!



# REWINDING BACK

A new column featuring articles from the past ; submissions please to your editor. Don't forget the date of the article!

Sent in by David A Ellis:

## CHESTER CINEMA SEAT-SLASHERS; GANG OF BOYS?

Perhaps the most worried men in the cinema business today are the managers. Lately their bugbear is the sudden outbreak of malicious damage to seats and fittings. Chester cinemas have suffered and the managers have the greatest trouble in getting materials to replace their losses. Consequently they propose to take the sternest measures against culprits who are caught.



The Odeon Chester c1947

Mr E Rhodes, manager of the Odeon says, "These idiots, by making replacements necessary, are impeding the war effort." On his desk are assorted pieces of rubber torn from the arms of seat by vandals. By various methods of ill-treatment, eight seats in his cinema have been rendered completely unfit for service. Sometimes men spend whole mornings looking for damage in the cinema. In the men's toilet at the back of the stalls fittings have been ripped away and on one occasion someone tampered with the taps there, completely flooding the place. "Where is the sense in this?" asks Mr Rhodes. "And what can the culprits possibly hope to gain? If they are apprehended there will be a prosecution and the fact will be brought home to them that their conduct is helping Hitler's war effort. No right-minded person can condemn too strongly this wanton destruction of property."

Losses in rubber at the Regal Cinema have to be replaced by wooden arms to seats. Many lamp fittings and similar accessories have been taken. Perhaps the result of acute 'fan' mania was the recent loss of still pictures from the entrance hall of this cinema. Great difficulty is experienced in obtaining replacements for these losses. Lately the trouble appears to have abated but one never knows when there will be another outbreak. At the Gaumont Palace £20 worth of damage has been done to property. In the opinion of the management it is the work of a gang of boys.

The Music Hall reports that one night ten seats were stripped of bolts and the arms slashed for the sake of the rubber pads. Damage at the Majestic has been even worse. In the last six months over 100 seats have been slashed. The part slashed is the actual tip-up on which patrons sit. Here too, wooden arm rests are being fitted. Like their colleagues they find the materials difficult to get but they are also short of labour. Strangely enough, the Tatler Cinema has had no cause for complaints.

Wherever the vandals have been busy, managers will take the most drastic measures to stop this senseless destruction. They will be glad of information leading to the culprits. They appeal to the public to give them the utmost cooperation, for which they will be most grateful.

Unknown Chester newspaper of 1943

## LAUGHTER IS THE WORST MEDICINE

Through laughing too much at a cinema in Warrington, a young woman dislocated her jaw. She was attended by a doctor and later sent to the infirmary, where her jaw was put back.

Courier & Advertiser - 8 November 1928

## A CAUSE OF FIRES IN CINEMAS

The frequency of cinema fires in Leeds is discussed in the seventh annual report of the Chief Constable (Mr RL Matthews) on music and cinema licensing, presented to the Watch Committee today. Mr Matthews says he considers these due in part to the coming of the 'talkies'. Because the number of silent films has been considerably reduced, the films in use are older and the repairs jam in the projecting machine.

Sir - May we correct a statement that was in the Chief Constable's report in reference to recent fires in cinemas? At present the talkie situation has not altered the supply of silent films one iota. In fact, many of the best silent pictures yet produced are at this time being released and this will continue to be the case for some considerable time. We can only assume that our Chief Constable has been wrongly advised.

Yours, etc John Claughton, Chairman & Edward W Rush, Secretary; Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association of Great Britain and Ireland; Leeds and District Branch; 6a Queen's Arcade Balcony, Leeds.

Yorkshire Post - December 1929

## FEWER CINEMAS IN BRITAIN TODAY

According to a 'census' just completed, there are fewer cinemas in the British Isles today than at the end of 1930. A survey made by the statistical department of the Western Electric Company shows that on 1 April there were 4,994 cinemas in the British Isles. Of these, 4,637 were wired for sound reproduction, 356 were closed and one was still a silent house. This is a reduction of 199 cinemas compared with November 1930. A year ago there were 84 silent picture houses, mostly in the north of England and in Scotland.

Aberdeen Press & Journal - 11 April 1935

## THE LAST SILENT CINEMA

The Electra Palace at Royston, near Manchester, the last silent cinema in the British Isles, has closed its doors. It had been showing silent pictures continuously since 1910, says the film correspondent of the Morning Post. Its patrons came regularly each week from Oldham, Rochdale and Chorlton-cum-Hardy; the price of admission was 2d and 5d.

Yorkshire Evening Post - 7 September 1937

## CINEMA OPENING - SUSSEX EXHIBITORS' MEETING

The question whether cinema houses should be allowed to open in the mornings was discussed at an emergency meeting of the Sussex branch of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association at Brighton on Tuesday. A letter from the Brighton Chief Constable, Captain Hutchinson, referred to the strict lighting restrictions in force at the present time and he said he was not satisfied that all the cinemas in Brighton were observing them carefully enough.

The letter also stated that the hours of opening in Brighton would remain at 1pm to 10pm. A member considered there would be a large public for morning entertainment as there was during the last war. After discussion it was decided to adopt a waiting policy in view of the fact that there was the possibility of lighting restrictions becoming less stringent. With morning openings it was stated that there might be difficulties about the female staff as many of them were married and had homes to keep. It was reported by a member that a local military authority had again requested that men in uniform should be allowed in the cinemas at half price. It was agreed that the question was a national one and could not be dealt with locally.

Sussex Express and County Herald - September 1939

## NEW CINEMA OPENS IN RUBERY

The opening ceremony of the new Rubery Cinema was performed yesterday afternoon by Councillor Major Jordan, who was accompanied by other members of Bromsgrove Council. This was the third cinema owned by Councillors WT and A Hodge and Mr WG Hodge to be opened on this side of the City; these three brothers already being the proprietors of the Northfield and Worley Castle cinemas. The proceeds of the first performance, the major item of which was the film *If I were King*, were handed over to the Bromsgrove Cottage Hospital. The new cinema, which has a modernisation [sic] brick exterior, has been constructed to the plans of the Birmingham architect, Mr HW Simister, with Kelley Bros of Redditch as main contractors. There is accommodation for one thousand and twenty people. The attractive interior decoration is mainly carried out in red and old gold.

Birmingham Mail - 30 May 1939



# THE BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT HISTORY PROJECT

Since 1987, Film and Television volunteer members of The British Entertainment History Project have been quietly and painstakingly recording audio and on-camera interviews with working men and women from the British film, television, radio and theatre industries to ensure that their lives and experiences are preserved for future generations; these interviews tell us about the challenges they had to overcome, the skills they employed, the enduring human relationships they forged as Britain developed into one of the world's major centres for entertainment industries. Some interviews are more than ten hours long and are important social documents of our time.

The Project has now grown into a unique collection of some 700 interviews including interviews with Sir Richard and David Attenborough, Lord David Putnam, Sheila Hancock, Dave (Darth Vader) Prowse and hundreds of others from all walks of life who have worked in our entertainment industries over the last hundred years – film editors, hair and makeup artists, actors, projectionists, writers and Directors of Photography to name just a few crafts represented in the Collection. Each interview is uploaded to the Project's new website [www.historyproject.org.uk] for use by students, researchers and anyone who wishes to know more about those who have worked in front of or behind the camera or microphone. The History Project, through these rare interviews, has tapped into a rich vein of anecdotal and

historical evidence of working practices and experiences that could otherwise be lost over time. The Project welcomes suggestions for interviewees who have a story to tell and from individuals interested in assisting the Project with this fascinating and important work.

Now, in its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year, The British Entertainment History Project is embarking on an ambitious programme of digitising and transcribing all its archived interviews. To help fund this important work and our Anniversary Year planned events, we are offering an opportunity to donate one or more of 25 individual amounts of £500. Each donor will, of course be fully credited and offered a further opportunity to register as a 'Friend' of the Project; this opportunity is also extended to our other supporters who have helped the Project develop in other practical ways. As a 'Friend', you will be kept informed of progress with the Project and of Project Events to which, as a 'Friend', you will have a priority invitation.

When considering this request, please feel free to contact me should you require further information on The British Entertainment History Project: E-Mail: [dthreadgall1165@gmail.com]. Telephone: (01245) 259806 or 07712378320. When sending a donation, please ensure that it is payable to The British Entertainment History Project and forwarded to Derek Threadgall, 10, Robjohns Road, Chelmsford CMI 3AF.

*Derek Threadgall, The British Entertainment History Project*

## ARCHIVE PHOTOGRAPH OF MEMBERS



Photograph taken on 20 February 2006 in the foyer of the National Theatre (ex Hoyts Victory) St Kilda, Melbourne, during "The Cinema and Theatres of Oz" visit organised by Ken Roe

<u>Back row:</u>	Michael Wood, Sarah Warne, Joy Surtees, John Surtees, Tim Addyman, Bryan Eckersley, David Cooper, Roger Screen
<u>Second from back row:</u>	Stephen Locking, Alistair Hughes, CATHS Member, Graham Rumble, Richard Norman, David Smith, David Williams, Richard Greenough, John Richardson, Jim Leworthy, Brent Skelly, David Vinnels, Ian Williams, John Seligman
<u>Middle row:</u>	Diana Hughes, Malcolm Davis, Gerry Kennedy, Ann Grant, Simon Christie, Joan Luck, Pam Richardson, Brian Luck, Barrie Gilbert, Ray Parry, Keith Addison
<u>Front row standing:</u>	CATHS Member, Neville Taylor, John Peto, Ken Roe, Jo Simmonds, Suzanne Leworthy, Steve McEvoy, Robert Stinson, John Skinner, Trevor Morson, John Benzing, Denis Ambrois
<u>Front row sitting:</u>	Patricia Levy, Eileen Killey, Ray Ritmeester, Hlia Douglas



# NEWSREEL

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

## ABERDEEN



There are plans to reopen the former Argosy in Bucksburn as a community hall. It is not known when the cinema opened and closed – can anyone help? It became a bingo hall and later snooker, which closed in the mid-1990s. The building is completely stripped back to the shell but evidence still exists of the former operating booth at high level, which connected directly to a private residence.

*Evening Express (Aberdeen) – 18 August; photo taken September 2008*

## BARNESLEY (South Yorks)

Plans for an Empire multiplex on top of the Alhambra Centre have been scrapped. The news comes just weeks after permission was given for ten screens instead of nine. The Council has signed up Cineworld to operate a thirteen-screen 2,400-seat cinema at The Glassworks Centre, anchored by a 450-seat 18m high 'super-screen'. See p22 Bulletin 51/3.

*Barnsley Chronicle – 16 June, 14 July*

## BIRMINGHAM (Longbridge)

Plans have been submitted for a nine-screen Light Cinema to be built as part of a new leisure complex overlooking the new Austin Park, on the former MG Rover site. Work is expected to commence in November and be completed in early 2019.

*Birmingham Mail, Bromsgrove Advertiser – 5 July*

## BLACKBURN (Lancs)

Restoration has begun on the grade II listed Cotton Exchange. The building used to house a five-screen Apollo cinema and others before that. It is to become an arts centre, which will incorporate a cinema. See Internet Corner p35. {24035}

*Lancashire Telegraph – 9 August; sent in by Philip Crompton*

## BLACKPOOL (Lancs)

Plans have been submitted for a new nine-screen Light cinema to be built on the Tower Street car park next to the Houndshill Centre. It will include an IMAX screen.

*Blackpool Gazette – 22 July; Lancashire Evening Post – 25 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

The Regent is to invest in a new projector and sound system. It reopened in July 2016 using 124 seats in the circle with an antiques centre in the stalls below. The building is listed grade II. {6549}

*The Gazette (Blackpool) – 16 August; sent in by Ray Dolling*

## BODMIN (Cornwall)

Plans have been approved to convert the grade II listed Public Rooms into a four-screen Merlin cinema; it will be called the Capital. No time scale has been given.

*Western Morning News – 15 August*

## BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)

James Courtage is the new manager of the three-screen Picture-drome. His appointment allows long-serving manager Louise Allsopp to concentrate on overseeing the recent acquisitions to Adam Cunnard's Electric Theatre chain. 31-year-old James started at the Picturedrome four years ago, when it was just two screens, serving as deputy manager for the last three. During this time he's also acted as relief manager at the Plaza Dorchester and the Maxime Blackwood. A fourth screen is currently under construction with an opening date pencilled in for the beginning of 2018. {14782}

*Sent in by Mike Whitcombe*

## BORTH (Ceredigion)

Libanus 1877 opened on 7 July as a fully-equipped 4k cinema with 59 seats. It is currently offering three daily shows of latest releases. The cinema is housed in a chapel that had been disused for a number of years, while still being kept in good condition, with the auditorium on the ground floor and a restaurant that opened in March above. Screen tabs are in use and there is a small stage. Borth is a village of about 1,400 people augmented in summer with visitors staying in surrounding caravan parks. It is seven miles north of Aberystwyth, which itself has two full-time single-screen cinemas. Despite its small size, the village is still connected to the national rail network with a station on the Aberystwyth to Shrewsbury line. [www.libanus1877.com]

*Sent in by Jeremy Perkins*

## BOURNEMOUTH

Plans have been submitted to demolish the former ABC and replace it with flats but retaining the façade, if it still exists under the cladding. The local Civic Society has said there is no justification for the demolition and has lodged an objection. It has said that it is likely that a significant amount of the original interior remains, hidden by the 1970s twinning. {24207}

*Daily Echo (Bournemouth) – 29 July, 7 August; sent in by John Forster, Geoff Gill & Philip Stevens*

Odeon has said that the sound levels in the iSense screen at the BH2 complex are in line with regulations, following a number of complaints that it is too loud. The issue has been highlighted with the popularity of *Dunkirk*; one patron said it wasn't so much the volume but the bass levels. Odeon said the sound systems are checked monthly. Earlier, a power failure had caused the cinema to close for a few hours on 2 August.

*Daily Echo (Bournemouth) – 2, 20 August; sent in by John Forster & Philip Stevens*

## BOVEY TRACEY (Devon)

There are ambitious plans to restore the derelict grade II listed King of Prussia pub and convert it into a cinema, theatre, arts centre and a fine dining restaurant.

*Herald Express (Torquay) – 19 July*

## BOWNESS-ON-WINDERMERE (Cumbria)



The Royalty celebrated its official 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on 22 July. There was a concert on the Wurlitzer organ, which was also used to accompany the 1923 silent film *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. The cinema actually opened on 24 February 1927 and was then called the Public Hall; the name is still visible on the façade. The flat stalls floor had removable seats and a maple dance floor for conversion to a ballroom. There were 600 seats in stalls and balcony. It was renamed the Royalty in 1930 and a second 100-seat screen was added on the



stage in 1995. The following year a 65-seat screen was added in the former circle lounge. The original auditorium remains substantially unaltered but now with 400 seats. The Wurlitzer organ also dates from 1927 and was originally installed in the Almira theatre in Cleveland, Ohio. It was shipped to England and fitted in the Rex Stratford, East London in 1936. After being in storage for many years, it was installed in the Royalty in 2012. {18521}

*Westmorland Gazette – 13 July; sent in by Philip Crompton; photo taken June 2008*

### BRACKNELL (Berks)

A new eleven-screen Cineworld was due to open on 15 September. It will have a 4DX screen.

*Bracknell News – 2 August*

### BRIERLEY HILL (Dudley)

Plans to turn the former Danilo into a theatre were refused. It opened in December 1936 and films ceased in February 1969. It became a bingo club until 2000, since when it has been a succession of night-clubs. {37851}

*Express & Star – 11 August; sent in by Chris Ingram via Carl Chesworth*

### BRYNMAWR (Blaenau Gwent)

The 320-seat Market Hall Cinema was officially reopened on 12 July by Newport-born actor Michael Sheen. It had been closed temporarily due to asbestos fears. There are plans for a 130-seat second screen in an adjacent building. The CTA visited after the AGM in May – see p21 last Bulletin. {26576}

*South Wales Argus – 4, 13 July*

### BURGESS HILL (West Sussex)

A ten-screen Cineworld is to be built in the town centre. It should be open by 2020.

*Argus (Brighton) – 25 July*

### BURNHAM MARKET (Norfolk)

The Hoste Arms in Burnham Market (aka Chelsea by the Sea) now has a 20-seat cinema where you can view films while being served drinks by a “personal waiter”. Presumably Kia Ora won’t be on offer. [tinyurl.com/y7bapfsf]

*Sent in by Terry Hanstock*

### BURNLEY (Lancs)

Plans have been submitted to turn the entrance area of the former Empire Theatre into a café bar with a rear terrace and balcony. There is a campaign to reopen the main part of the grade II listed building, which has been empty since 1995 and is in serious decline. A new study has shown it would not be financially viable if reopened. {36755}

*Burnley Express – 3, 16 August; Lancashire Telegraph – 17 August; sent in by Philip Crompton*

### CAMBRIDGE

An IMAX screen opened on 21 July in screen ⑨ at the Light cinema (ex Cineworld). Screens ① to ⑧ will be re-stepped and fitted with luxury seating during September and October, two auditoria at a time.

*Cambridge Independent – 26 July; Cambridge News – 4 August*

### CANVEY ISLAND (Essex)



The owner of the four-screen Movie Starr has been forced to monitor the door of the cinema after two groups of travellers arrived on the seafront. They were sneaking in to watch films and stealing the pick and mix. The Council has been very proactive in its response. {14619}

*Basildon, Canvey & Southend Echo – 31 July; photo taken July 2007*

### CHORLEY (Lancs)

The site has been cleared and building work is about to commence on the Market Walk shopping centre extension. It will incorporate a Reel cinema.

*Lancashire Telegraph – 5 August*

### CHRISTCHURCH (Dorset)



The Regent had a scheduled closure in July whilst refurbishment was carried out in the bar. However, the closure was extended when a fault was revealed on the outside of the building. A full structural survey was called and the venue was able to reopen using the stalls only. Work started on 21 August to strengthen one of the main columns used to support the balcony, which was expected to reopen on 8 September. More serious repairs are being planned and expected to be carried out in summer 2018. Meanwhile, temporary scaffolding will be put in place this autumn to provide support to the south east wall of the auditorium. {24540} *Photo taken May 2006.*

*Daily Echo (Bournemouth) – 15, 22 July, 21 August; sent in by Philip Stevens*

### COLERAINE (County Londonderry, Northern Ireland)

The Jet Centre was evacuated after an electrical fire during a screening of the World War Two film *Dunkirk*. The cinema was evacuated briefly after a stage speaker in the cinema screen apparently short-circuited.

*BBC News; sent in by Bob Bradshaw*

### CREWE (Cheshire)

Another cinema could be built as part of a proposed development of the Regal Arcade. The site was bought by the Council more than two years ago. Crewe already has a five-screen Odeon (ex Reel).

*Crewe Chronicle – 5 July*

### DARTFORD (Kent)

A cinema could be incorporated in the redevelopment of the former Co-op site in Lowfell Street. It is very near the former Granada, now a church.

*News Shopper (Greenwich & Charlton) – 5 July*

### DONCASTER (South Yorks)

A six-screen 1,600-seat cinema, believed to be Savoy is planned for the town centre. However the local newspaper has questions as to why a perfectly good cinema (Gaumont) was bulldozed. There is also the former ABC lying empty.

*Doncaster Free Press – 17 August*

### DUDLEY

The Merry Hill Centre has new owners, who have announced plans for a £100m revamp. They plan to relocate and enlarge the existing ten-screen Odeon. No time scale for the project has been given.

*Express & Star – 31 July; Stourbridge News – 3 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

### DUNDEE

Proposals for a nine-screen Light cinema in the Wellgate Centre were put on hold last year, following the collapse of BHS. It is now hoped that plans will soon be put forward to relocate the cinema to the front of the centre, where the additional space would allow for an IMAX screen. There would be 800 to 900 luxury seats.

*Evening Telegraph (Dundee) – 27 July*

### EDINBURGH

A twin-screen cinema is to be included in the development of the former Scotsman building. It will be operated by the G1 Group, which has the Grosvenor in Glasgow.

*The Scotsman, Edinburgh Evening News – 8 August*



## EXMOUTH (Devon)

WTW / Scott Cinemas has taken over the former kebab shop to the left of the three-screen Savoy. They are converting it to widen the existing narrow entrance and fitting it with comfortable seats. {23360}

*Posted to the cta-uk Yahoo! Group in August*

## FORDINGBRIDGE (Hants)



The newly re-opened 30-seat Regal will operate as a not-for-profit community cinema. Adult ticket prices will be £9 but special screenings including live links from places such as the National Theatre and the Royal Opera House will be more. Children's and family tickets will be discounted. It is planned to show three films every weekend with occasional special one-off events. Tickets for the cinema however can only be purchased by cinema club members from the website. There appears to be no provision for purchasing tickets any other way. This seems a backward step as it took theatres some years to accept payment by credit or debit cards. No doubt there are valid business reasons for doing this. {37771}

*Forest Journal – 29 June; sent in & photo by Ian Patterson;  
Daily Echo (Bournemouth) – 5 July; sent in by John Forster*

## FORT WILLIAM (Highland)

The Lochaber Cinema Group wants to turn two vacant shops at the eastern end of the High Street into a two-screen cinema with about 130 seats. They originally wanted to reopen the former cinema in Cameron Square but it would have been too expensive to provide disabled access. The building work would cost about £235,000 and will need another £150,000 spent on seating and equipment. A public consultation on the plans was due to be held in August.

*Press & Journal (Highland) – 29 June*

## GIRVAN (Ayrshire)

The former Vogue has been declared "Ayrshire's biggest pigeon hole". The building has been empty for several years. See p24 Bulletin 51/3. {50825}

*Carrick Herald – 13 June*

## GLASGOW



The twelve-screen Odeon at Glasgow Quay is being upgraded. Screen ① will have an iSENSE screen fitted. The work will be done without closing and it is scheduled for completion this autumn. The cinema opened in September 1996. {27085}

*Glasgow Evening Times – 7 August; photo taken December 2008*

Vue is to operate a proposed nine-screen cinema as part of the development of the St Enoch Centre. It will be in the former BHS store to the rear of the centre. It is expected to open in 2019.

*The Herald (Glasgow), Glasgow Evening Times, The Scotsman – 14 July*

## GORLESTON-ON-SEA (Norfolk)



The former Palace is to reopen as a four-screen 540-seat cinema. It originally opened in 1929 with 942 seats in stalls and balcony. Films ceased in 1964 and it became a bingo club, which closed in 2012. The operator will be Patrick Duffy, who operated the bingo and also has bingo in Great Yarmouth; he is also behind a successful cinema in Felixstowe. He said the conversion was straightforward, removing the flat floor he put in 19 years ago. The venue will retain a bingo presence, linked to national games. However a later report says the work has hit minor setbacks and is now expected to open in September. {6289} *Photo taken July 2007.*

*Eastern Daily Press – 17 June; Great Yarmouth Mercury – 18 August;*

## GRANTHAM (Lincs)

Preparatory archaeological investigation work has been completed on the site of a new cinema in St Catherine's Road; construction is expected to start shortly. The size has been reduced from six screens to five at the request of the operator, who has not been named. It will mean a reduction in seating from just over 1,000 to 705. An opening date of November/December 2018 has been given. It is being built adjacent to the existing two-screen Reel cinema (ex Paragon), which will close in mid-May and then be demolished.

*Grantham Journal – 16 June, 7 July; Sleaford Target – 17 June*

## GRIMSBY (North Lincs)

A nine-screen cinema could be built as part of the Freshney Place development. No operator has been mentioned.

*Grimsby Telegraph – 14, 25, 27 July*

## HASTINGS (East Sussex)

Worried fans raised fears for the future of the Odeon after its photo was wrongly displayed in a property for sale advert. The estate agent apologised for their mistake and the cinema confirmed it has a long lease and has no plans to change the way it operates.

*Hastings & St Leonards Observer – 23 June*

## HAVERFORDWEST (Pembroke)

Plans for a five-screen cinema on the Wilko site at Old Bridge have been approved. It would have a capacity of about 500 seats but would see the loss of 59 car parking spaces. There is an existing two-screen Palace cinema in the town centre.

*Western Telegraph (Pembroke) – 2 August*

## HENLEY-ON-THAMES (Oxon)

The Regal Picturehouse has renewed its commitment to host regular 'dementia friendly' screenings of classic films, although funding from the Alzheimer's Society has now stopped. {24767}

*Henley Standard – 23 June*

## HEXHAM (Northumberland)

The Forum Cinema marked the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its opening on 23 August 1937 with special screenings that week of *Singing in the Rain* chosen by patrons and *Keep your seats, please* (1936) with George Formby, which was the first film ever shown there. On the actual anniversary date, they presented a 35mm screening of the film currently running there, *Dunkirk*. These events were accompanied by traditional 1930s tea and cakes and in some cases a glass of wine. Now occupying just the 208-seat circle area of the original auditorium, the Forum is a community owned operation. There is a Wetherspoons pub underneath. The CTA visited in October 2011. {3148}

*Sent in by David & Margaret Williams; photo top next column*





The Forum Hexham in August 2007

## HUDDERSFIELD (West Yorks)



Ambitious plans have been put forward to convert the former Tudor/Essoldo/Classic/Cannon into the biggest pub in the UK. It will be called the Colosseum, because of its size. The ceiling will be high enough to feature acrobats and will have the biggest bass speaker in the world built into it. The building started life as a riding stable in 1846 and was converted into a theatre in 1902. It became a cinema in 1930 and films ceased in February 1995; it has since been used as a bar, interspersed with periods of disuse. {3344}

*Huddersfield Daily Examiner* – 26 July; photo taken August 2005

## IPSWICH (Suffolk)



A six-month long refurbishment at the Cineworld was officially reopened on 2 August. An extra 244-seat screen has been created on the first floor, where the coffee bar used to be. New seats have been fitted in most of the screens. The venue already had an IMAX and a 4DX screen. It opened in May 1998 as the eleven-screen Virgin and later became the UGC before being taken over by Cineworld. A fourteen-screen Empire opened in the Buttermarket Centre last March. {24295}

*East Anglian Daily Times* – 10, 29 July; photo taken July 2007

## LANARK



Forthcoming legislation could allow the Lanark Community Development Trust to buy the grade C(s) listed former Regal at a fair price set by an independent valuer and reopen it as a cinema. The building operated as a cinema from 1936 until the 1970s, when it became bingo. A trial screening of films in 2006/7, using the original equipment still in the box, was not successful. The scheme to give Banatyne Street a facelift also includes converting the Royal Oak Hotel across the street into flats. {24306}

*Carlisle Gazette* – 26 July; photo taken August 2009

## LANCING (West Sussex)



Plans have been submitted to convert what remains of the former Luxor into flats. Similar conversions were approved in 2003 and 2007 but never constructed. The cinema opened in January 1940 with 998 seats in stalls and a steeply-raked circle. Films ceased in June 1965 and bingo took over, which ceased in the early-1980s. The auditorium was demolished and flats built on the site. The building was nearly destroyed by a fire in August 2016. {35057}

*Worthing Herald* – 11 July; photo taken March 2009

## LEEDS (West Yorks)

Work has started on phase two of the Thorpe Park development to the east of the City. It will include a ten-screen Odeon. No timescale has been given. The site is to the east of the City at M1 J46; the existing cinemas are in the centre, the west and the southwest.

*Yorkshire Post* – 6 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Geoff Gill

## LEWES (West Sussex)

The newly-opened three-screen Depot cinema has won a major prize in the 2017 Sussex Heritage Trust Awards. It was visited by the CTA on 26 August.

*The Argus (Brighton)* – 11 July; *Sussex Express* – 14 July; sent in by Barry Quinton

## LONDON (Camden)

Plans for a three-screen cinema in the former Marine Ices building in Chalk Farm Road have been scrapped. This is the second such happening in the past year; a proposal to turn the former North London Polytechnic building in Prince of Wales Road into a cinema was also scrapped when the developer could not find an interested operator.

*Camden New Journal* – 10 August; sent in by Keith Bye

## LONDON (Covent Garden)

The Theatre Royal Drury Lane is to have a £35m revamp. The details are being kept secret but the venue will be closed for "an extended period". The venue had a £4m restoration in 2013.

*The Stage* – 29 June; sent in by R David Simpson



## LONDON (Ealing)

The developers behind the Ealing Filmworks have proposed changes to their plans to build more homes. It is unclear if this will affect the eight-screen 1,045-seat Picturehouse being built on the site. Construction started last December and opening is set for 2019.

*Ealing & Acton Gazette – 23 June*

## LONDON (Golders Green)

The grade II listed Hippodrome was put back on the market and was sold for £5¼m at an auction on 24 July; the identity of the buyer has not been revealed. It was designed by Bertie Crewe in 1913 and was used by the BBC from 1969 to 2005. More recently it had been used as a church. The Estate Agent's particulars with some good pictures are at [tinyurl.com/ybx828nr]; they describe it as "in need of refurbishment". See p25 Bulletin 51/3. {29969}

*Ham & High – 6 July; sent in by Keith Bye*

## LONDON (Greenwich)

The Cineworld at the O2 (Millennium Dome) is to have a makeover. Screen numbers will be increased from 11 to 18 and a 4DX screen will be installed.

*Evening Standard – 10 August; sent in by R David Simpson*

## LONDON (Highams Park)

There are plans to transform the former Regal into a three-screen Curzon arthouse cinema with a restaurant and 34 flats. A public consultation was held in August. {30181}

*Chingford Guardian – 9, 17 August*

## LONDON (Hoxton)

A three-screen Curzon cinema is being built on the site of the former Hoxton Cinema in Pitfield Street; opening is planned for next year. The façade of the original cinema is being rebuilt as it collapsed last year during building works.

*Hackney Gazette – 6 July*

## LONDON (Lewisham)

Proposals have been made to redevelop the Ladywell Playtower. The grade II listed building once housed the public baths but has been out of use for more than a decade. The plans include a three- or five-screen cinema; Picturehouse is thought to be the potential operator but bids were also received from Curzon and others.

*News Shopper – 20 July; South London Press – 1 August; sent in by Philip Stevens*

## LONDON (South Ruislip)

The new eleven-screen 1,745-seat Cineworld opened on 5 July at Victoria Road

*Uxbridge & West Drayton Gazette – 12 July; Harrow Times – 12 July; sent in by Mike Collins & R David Simpson*

## LONDON (Streatham)



The foyer block of the former Regal/ABC/Cannon, which has been empty since the cinema closed in 2000, is now occupied by a shop selling carpets and rugs, after being unsuccessfully advertised for restaurant use. The auditorium of the Grade II listed building was demolished for flats in 2004. {19963}

*Sent in by Jeremy Buck; photo taken August 2009*

## LONDON (West End)

The nine-screen Vue (ex Warner) reopened on 10 July after being closed since 9 March for a £6.6m refurbishment. It now has 1,385 VIP and luxurious recliner seats throughout all the screens and Dolby Atmos sound in some auditoria. {3778} *Photo on front cover.*

*Evening Standard – 10 July; Time Out – 11 July; sent in by Keith Bye & R David Simpson*

## LONGRIDGE (Lancs)



The Palace is up for sale as a going concern as the 81-year-old owner, Dorothy Williamson, has decided to retire. Several interested parties attended an open day at the cinema. It is thought the asking price is £300k. {6903}

*Longridge & Ribbles Valley News – 2 August; Lancashire Evening Post – 3 August; sent in by David Alexander; photo taken September 2003*

## LYME REGIS (Dorset)

The insurance claim for the fire-damaged grade II listed Regent has been agreed. Owners Scott Cinemas can now commence work on reinstating the building; it is hoped to start by the end of 2017. {22441}

*View From Lyme Regis – 21 June*

## MANCHESTER (Stretford)



Workmen have been spotted on the canopy of the grade II listed former Essoldo in Longford. Does this mean something is happening at long last? The cinema opened in October 1936. Films ceased in September 1965 in favour of bingo. That closed in the 1990s and the building has been empty since. {13796}

*Sent in by Nick Taylor; photo taken April 2003*

## NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

Everyman is proposing to open a subterranean 'boutique' cinema in Grey Street. It would have two 60-seat screens. See p31.

*Evening Chronicle (Newcastle), The Journal (Newcastle) – 14 July*

The former Empire in the Gate leisure complex has been refurbished and reopened as a Cineworld on 16 June. The number of screens has been increased from 12 to 16. It opened as an Odeon in November 2002 but was almost immediately taken over by Empire. {25181}

*Evening Standard – 10 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth & R David Simpson*

The Grade I listed Tyne Theatre and Opera House will celebrate its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 23 September, having opened in 1867. Following closure as a theatre in March 1919, it was acquired by Sir Oswald Stoll and reopened as the Stoll Picture Theatre on 2 June 1919, an operation that continued for almost 55 years until 23 March 1974 when the





cinema era ended. It was the first cinema in Newcastle to install sound and the first talkie, Al Jolson's *The Singing Fool*, ran for ten weeks from 11 May 1929. After three year's closure it reopened as a theatre under its original name, an operation that continues today. To mark its cinema history, the theatre, in conjunction with the Whitley Bay Film Festival, presented three days of film screenings on 11, 12 and 13 August in both the main auditorium and the Bistro. These included the 1933 *King Kong* with an accompanying monster animation workshop, the 1925 *Phantom of the Opera* and a celebration of Newcastle in film with special guests including historian Chris Phipps and writer Peter Flannery. The CTA visited in October 2011. {2060}

*Sent in by David & Margaret Williams; photo taken August 2007*

### NEWMARKET (Suffolk)

The Council has allocated £50,000 for a feasibility study towards a cinema in the town. The potential is for a 600-seat cinema with four to six screens.

*East Anglian Daily Times – 14, 23 June; Newmarket News – 28 June*

### OSWESTRY (Shropshire)

A plan to open a new 150-seat cinema in the former Salvation Army building is pressing ahead, despite councillors saying they would support only a multiplex. Cineworld once planned a multiplex but pulled out.

*Oswestry & Border Counties Advertiser – 20 June*

### OXFORD



The two-screen Phoenix Picturehouse in Walton Street closed on 7 August for two months to fix sound and sightline issues, which have made the showing of subtitled and quieter films problematic. New sound-proofing and work to the existing sound system will also take place as well as the installation of larger screens in the two auditoria. {15819}

*Oxford Mail – 12 July; photo taken February 2004*

### PETERBOROUGH (Cambs)

To celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Odeon [now Broadway Theatre] on 2 September the BBC Concert Orchestra were due to perform live on stage a concert of film music. {19950}

*Peterborough Telegraph – 29 June*

### PLYMOUTH

Plans for a multiplex at the redeveloped Plymouth Argyll Football Stadium have been dropped. It is believed that Odeon was interested in this scheme. A Cineworld is being built in the City centre and there is already a Vue multiplex.

*Western Morning News – 22 July*

### RAMSGATE (Kent)



The new Wetherspoons pub in the former Royal Victoria Pavilion opened on 29 August. It is reputed to be Britain's biggest pub. As an idea of scale the ground floor bar had 10 people serving, the numbered tables ran close to 500, whilst excellent coverage of its history is supplied, including the 1903 architect SD Adshead. The building was a full-time 1,200-seat cinema from 1929 to 1951, except during WWII; it was last used as a casino. {43938}

*Isle of Thanet Gazette – 30 June;*

*sent in by Margaret Burgoine, R David Simpson & Martin Tapsell [photos]*

### REDHILL (Surrey)

Light Cinemas has been confirmed as the operator of a new seven-screen 500-seat cinema to be built in Marketfield Way. Work is due to start next year.

*Surrey Mirror – 13 July*

### RIPON (North Yorks)

Further to the item on p28 of the last Bulletin about the former Palladium, I passed by in mid-July and found builders at work. A sign advertised another shop 'opening soon' – it looked as if the shop area had been made larger than the previous one. {3381}

*Sent in by Harry Rigby*

### ROMSEY (Hants)

Plans to renovate the Plaza have been granted on appeal. The Council had objected to the scheme to raise the roof by five feet. The appeal has cost the Romsey Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society [RAODS] £5,000 and put their plans back "two to three years". This summer the Society will be spending £135,000 on internal improvements; the total renovation will cost £300,000. The CTA visited in 2015. {41645}

*Daily Echo (Southampton) – 23 June; sent in by Ian Patterson;*

### SELSEY (Hants)

The Pavilion has been awarded a £35,000 grant from the Town Council. This is the first milestone in a proposed restoration programme. See p24 Bulletin 51/2. {43436}

*Chichester Observer – 30 June*

### SHEFFIELD

More silent film shows have been held at the grade II listed Abbeydale. In May, Hitchcock's 1927 *The Lodger* had a full orchestra for accompaniment [photo]. In July the Imperial War Museum hosted the 1916 *The Battle of the Somme* with a 50-piece orchestra. The projection equipment was provided and manned by the PPT.

*The Star – 22 July;*

*sent in by Dion Hanson & Stuart Smith*





## SKEGNESS (Lincs)



A live show *Smash Hit Songs from Blockbuster Musicals* was held on stage at the Tower cinema on 7 July. {25355}

*Lincolnshire Life* – 1 July; photo taken May 2004

## SOUTHEND-ON-SEA (Essex)

A developer is working in partnership with the Council to bring an eleven-screen 1,370-seat Empire multiplex to the Seaway Car Park. If permission is granted, building is expected to start next year, opening in late 2019 or early 2020. The announcement puts this scheme ahead of another cinema development planned by Southend United Football Club at Fossetts Farm.

*Ozseeker* – 28 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

Planning permission is being sought for 24 flats on the site of the former Empire, which was demolished earlier this year.

*Southend Echo* – 22 August; sent in by Raymond Palmer

## SOUTHPORT (Lancs)

Plans – announced on p28 of the last Bulletin – have been approved for an independent cinema in the former Latin Lounge.

*Southport Champion* – 12 July

## ST HELIER (Jersey, CI)

The Port of Jersey has applied for permission to upgrade the existing outdoor eating area at the Elizabeth Terminal. The plans could include an alfresco cinema!

*Jersey Evening Post* – 19 July

## STAFFORD

Construction has commenced on a new seven-screen 800-seat Odeon on the former *Express & Star* site in Bridge Street. No opening date has been given.

*Express & Star* – 10 July

## TAUNTON (Somerset)

The *Brewhouse Theatre* has unveiled plans for a £30m refurbishment. The new venue would wrap around the existing 1970s auditorium and house studios, a cinema and a gallery. An extra 200 seats would be added. The venue went into administration in February 2013 but reopened in 2014. It is owned by the Council.

*The Stage* – 29 June; sent in by R David Simpson

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS (Kent)

Plans for a boutique cinema (size, capacity and operator not given) have been submitted for approval. It is to be part of a development on the former ABC (etc) site. Where the cinema will be located will be interesting as there is a covenant in the site preventing a cinema being built.

*Kent & Sussex Courier* – 14 July

## WEDNESBURY (Sandwell & Dudley)

The former Gaumont is to be converted into a five-screen 900-seat cinema, run by Picturedrome Cinemas. As much as possible of the building's appearance inside and out – such as the canopy and tiles at the front of the building – will be retained. Admission will be £2.50 for everyone on weekdays and £3.50 at weekends. The venue opened in October 1938 with 1,594 seats. It became an Odeon in March 1964. It was taken over by an independent operator in January 1972 and renamed *Silver* cinema; this closed in April 1974 and bingo took over. That ceased in February 2010. The empty building suffered a fire in February 2014. The CTA visited in April 2000. {32515}

*Express & Star* – 17 August; *Picturedrome Cinemas Press Release* – 15 August;

Main exterior photo [top next column] taken August 2004



Two views of the 2014 fire damage; photos Vera Waters via Ken Roe

## WELLINGTON (SHROPSHIRE)

The former *Clifton* cinema is to be cleaned up by the previous occupiers, Dunelm. It has been empty since they moved out in 2012. There is a community campaign to reopen it as an arts centre. The group has secured a short-term lease on the former HSBC bank. They plan to open an 80-seat cinema to aid their fundraising efforts. {37745}

*Shropshire Star* – 1, 31 July

## WEXFORD (Ireland)

The three screen *Arc Cinema* has opened in Wexford town. It is in the former *Cineplex* building, which closed some ten years ago when the owners built a larger multiplex elsewhere and had remained empty.

Sent in by Bob Bradshaw

## WOLVERHAMPTON

The *Light House* is to have three new signs installed as part of new plans to get the venue more on the map. It is housed in the historic *Chubb* building. The Council funded an extra £11,000 this year; next year the Council will fund the venue's rent only.

*Express & Star* – 3 July; sent in by Ivan Harris

## WORTHING (West Sussex)

In the six weeks after the *Connaught Studio* was given a £80,000 revamp, which included a tiered balcony, *Worthing Theatres* announced ticket sales had increased by ten per cent. They added that 20 screenings had been sold out – although the capacity was reduced from 250 to 160 because of the refurbishment.

*Worthing Journal* – June; sent in by Mike Whitcombe

The former *Tourist Information Office* that occupied the currently deserted shop on the left hand entrance to the *Dome* cinema could be turned into a third screen for the cinema if planners agree.

*Worthing Journal* – July; sent in by Mike Whitcombe

## YORK

*Everyman* has unveiled its plans for the grade II listed former *Odeon / Reel*. It closed on 24 September for a three-month refurbishment. All five auditoria will be retained and re-stepped and re-seated. Screen ① will have a free-standing screen installed in front of the existing one, meaning a reduction in capacity from 400 [although the figure of 72 quoted in the report seems wrong to your editor]. The foyer will be reorganised, including the removal of a false ceiling in the first floor lobby. Outside, an *Everyman* sign will replace the *Reel* one; the *ODEON* sign will be retained [it is listed] and wiring will be tidied up. The *Odeon* opened in February 1937. {2788}

*Screen Daily* – 20 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

Meanwhile, work is expected to begin in October on the *Community Stadium* project at *Monks Cross*, which will include a thirteen-screen cinema with an IMAX screen. No operator was mentioned in the report.

*Press (York)* – 24 July



## CINEMA BUSINESS

### ODEON PROFITS DOWN

Profits at Odeon cinemas fell by more than half as it filled 4m fewer seats last year. The chain posted full-year profits before tax of £9.9m for 2016, compared with £21.6m in the previous year. Attendance figures fell from 172m to 168m but turnover increased by £2m to £220m. It has embarked on a heavy investment plan, ploughing more than £25m into new sites and maintenance of its estate.

*Daily Telegraph* – 3 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Geoff Gill

### CINEWORLD PROFITS UP

Cineworld profits rose 57.5% to £48.2m in the first half of this year. Revenue jumped 17.8% to £420.2m. Admissions were up 10% to a record 50.7m. Average ticket prices rose 2% to £6.40. The chain has 2,136 screens around the world.

*Evening Standard* – 10 August; *Daily Mail, Metro* – 11 August; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

### EVERYMAN EXPANDS

Everyman Media Group said it has exchanged contracts to launch cinemas in Liverpool, Newcastle and London. Venues in Liverpool and Newcastle are expected to open next year while a cinema in London's Borough Market will launch in 2020. The new agreements bring Everyman's total pipeline to nine new cinemas. The company said it is "on track" to open a permanent site in Kings Cross in November and has acquired a 28-year lease for the existing five-screen Reel cinema in York. The property will be revamped and relaunched as an Everyman early next year. A statement from Everyman Media Group added: "In summary, the group has performed in line with expectations in the first six months of 2017, the board is confident of a successful outcome for the full year and the pipeline is continuing to be developed in line with investors' expectations." As of 29 June, Everyman operated 21 cinemas. The Company's shares rose 1.23p to 169.93p. See Newsreel p28.

*Everyman Press Release, Evening Standard* – 24 July; sent in by Allen Eyles, Tom Laughlan & Martin Tapsell

### POP-UP

Pop-Up cinemas are "popping up" all over the place. Venues this summer in London have included: the Rivoli ballroom in Brockley; River boats on the Thames; Natural History Museum; Kew Gardens; Westminster Abbey Courtyard; Brockwell Lido; Tooting Common; various rooftop cinemas.

*Time Out* – 9-14 August; sent in by Tom Laughlan, Gavin McGrath & R David Simpson

### IMAX

Canadian IMAX Corporation is to lay off roughly 100 full-time employees as part of a company-wide effort to rein in costs.

*Variety* – 26 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

### LASSIE COME HOME?

The Picturehouse Central in London's Piccadilly Circus has dog friendly shows every six weeks.

Sent in by Martin Tapsell

## 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

### 2018 Cinema Calendar

With twelve different colour photos of British Cinemas old and new. Available from late-October. Still only £6, including postage. Please make cheque payable to Harry Rigby or simply send £5 note plus two loose first-class stamps to:

Harry Rigby, 65 Tennyson Avenue, Harrogate, HG1 3LE or email [harry.rigby@ntlworld.com] for details of how to pay by EFT and save yourself a stamp!



## MISCELLANY

### CHAPLIN BLUE PLAQUE

Comedian Paul Merton unveiled a blue plaque to Charlie Chaplin on 14 June. Chaplin lived in a top-floor flat at Glenshaw Mansions in Kennington with his mother and older brother until 1910, which he later described as a "cherished haven."

*Evening Standard* – 14 June; sent in by Tom Laughlan



### CHINA CRISIS?

China has set up a cinema on Woody Island in the South China Sea; the territory is also claimed by Taiwan and Vietnam. There are about 1,000 residents, three-quarters of whom are Chinese military personnel. The cinema has portable digital projectors and will occasionally travel to other Chinese-controlled islands in the South China Sea to entertain troops and residents.

*South China Morning Post* – 24 July; sent in by Bob Bradshaw

### BURIED TREASURE

Builders renovating the home of a late cinema owner in Cardiff found over 70 perfectly preserved cinema posters, which had been used as carpet underlay. The giant prints – some up to 10ft tall – were used at the New Theatre, Capitol, Empire and Olympia theatres between 1936 and 1940. Included are Alfred Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent* and John Wayne's *Stagecoach*. The collection was due to be auctioned on 15 September; it is so rare that the auctioneers have been unable to put a value on it.

*Western Mail* – 18 August

### DRONE OVER DOVER

Anyone interested in cinema construction should go to [www.stjamesdover.co.uk] and view the Apex Drone photography hovering over this large site, which also includes a Travelodge and a new M&S, as well as the six screen Cineworld in close proximity.

If that is not enough for you go to [www.apexdronephotography.co.uk] and click recent productions. An aerial view appears – click on cinema. A panning view inside the Cineworld showing the steel framing and rakes, stairs etc will play out slowly, or you can speed it up with your mouse.

Sent in by Martin Tapsell

## NECROLOGY

### SIR BRUCE FORSYTH 89

Best known for his TV appearances, lately in *Strictly Come Dancing* but also *The Generation Game* and *Sunday Night at the London Palladium*. On the big screen he appeared in *Star!*, *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* and *House!* He left £17m to his third wife in his will.



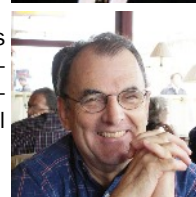
### BARRY NORMAN CBE 83

Probably the most famous film critic this country has ever produced. He presented the BBC's *Film* programme from 1972 to 1998. He called his autobiography "And Why Not?" After his famous catch phrase.



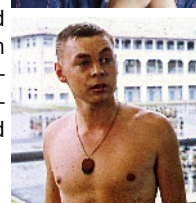
### BRYAN AVERY 73

The architect, who died in July, designed the BFI's IMAX cinema on London's South Bank, the Museum of the Moving Image for the BFI under Waterloo Bridge and the rebuilding of RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art) in Bloomsbury.



### HYWEL BENNET 73

Appeared in *The Family Way*, *Twisted Nerve* and *The Virgin Soldiers* [R]. He continued to work on stage and TV, most notably in the ITV series *Shelley*. Sadly his success was hampered by alcoholism and an over-active thyroid, which contributed to a change in his appearance.



Sent in by Jeremy Buck and Barry Quinton



# LETTERS

## PREMIUM PRICING IN CINEMAS: OLD AS THE HILLS?

There has been robust discussion recently about cinema circuits charging a premium for major films in their early weeks of release. One circuit has said that they have been doing this for about three years. I would suggest it is more like eighty years! Before multiplexes, larger towns had several cinemas owned by the same circuit, with the better appointed ones taking the first week of the more important films. It was accepted that these venues had higher admission prices – that is, they charged a premium. People like to be the first to see a newly-released film, buy a just-published book or wear the latest fashion. Cinemas, like bookshops and clothes stores, reflect this. The main difference now with cinemas is that it is happening within one building. Plus ça change?

Jeremy Perkins

## MISTAKEN IDENTITY

In the photo of members on page 22 of the July/Aug Bulletin, I think one of the names is incorrect. Between Giles Woodforde and Tony Moss, I'm pretty sure it is Richard Cole, not Robert Rimell.

Jeremy Buck

Apologies to Richard and Robert for the mix-up!

Ken Roe

## MANCHESTER REASONING

Re Newsreel p27 last Bulletin. Could the "unspecified" problems for the delay in the demolition of the Paramount/Odeon Manchester be that it's suddenly been realised – far too late, of course – that this magnificent cinema/theatre should never have been pulled down in the first place?

Joseph Roberts

## MORE ABOUT BOSTON

I was interested in Maurice Brader's article on the Scala Boston in the last Bulletin. The café remained open for some years after the cinema closed. I was told my parents took me in there as a small child (late 1940s) and the cashier gave me some Smarties from a cocoa tin! You could sit out on the balcony over the front entrance, overlooking the Market Place. There is more about all the Boston cinemas in the late Mervyn Gould's book *Boston and Spalding Entertainment and the Aspen Howdens* (2005).

R David Simpson

**Editor's Note:** The *Boston...* book is available from the CTA Sales Officer for £9.50 + p&p – address on p2.

## THANKS KEVIN

I thoroughly enjoyed Kevin Wheelan's article in the last Bulletin describing his memories of the Premier Cinema, Enfield. It was a lovingly written piece that expressed the fondness most cinema enthusiasts feel for their childhood movie haunts. One paragraph, in particular, made me smile. That was the description of the projectionist who was "invariably dressed in a shabby raincoat". I once worked with a projectionist who used to wear a cream coloured coat to work that was stained with oil, grease – the mechanical as well as the chip fat variety – and good old fashioned dirt! Whenever he hung it up in our projection box I always wanted to take it to the local dry cleaners – but I never did!

Mike Whitcombe

## LET IT RAIN

The lack of a sustained summer this year has led to tourist chiefs around the country to sound alarm bells. To emphasise the point a BBC reporter spoke to the manager of Bournemouth Pier, who claimed footfall to the attraction was down and that times were tough. This report reminded me of a tale recounted by Bob Dobson, Odeon's senior engineer when I was a projectionist at the Odeon Portsmouth over ten years ago. As we enjoyed a cuppa or two along with a packet of plain chocolate biscuits (Bob always insisted on plain chocolate!) early one morning in the projectionist's rest room, Bob recalled being a chief projectionist at a site in Bournemouth during the 1960s. On rain-lashed days during the holiday season as tourists glumly walked the wet streets of the resort, Bob's old cinema manager would pace his entrance foyer with glee. "What lovely weather," he would say before opening the doors to drenched hordes, desperate to escape the rain no matter what rubbish was being screened!

Mike Whitcombe

## LEICESTER

Carl Jennings is right (p32 last Bulletin). I got the name of the lady stripper wrong; it was Pauline Penny. I did have a large collection of playbills but these seem to have been lost over the years. The other theatres I remember were the Theatre Royal in Horsefair Street. This was demolished in 1956 despite a lot of Council lobbying and letters in the press. The Royal Opera House in Silver Street was closed in 1953. I passed by the closed building every day on the way to school from 1955 to 1959. It changed hands in mid-1959 and reopened at Christmas that year with *Sindbad The Sailor*. However success was short-lived and it closed finally in the summer of 1960. Demolition soon followed.

Leicester in those days had the reputation of being an anti-theatre City. At one time during the panto several of the audience shouted out, "Get Off, This Is Leicester." However this does not square with fact that Leicester had five theatres before the war. Apart from the Palace, Theatre Royal and Royal Opera House, there were also the Hippodrome in Wharf Street, which survived in a much altered condition until recent years, and the Pavilion in Belgrave Road, which was demolished for road widening.

Ian Patterson

## LEICESTER CINEMAS CONTINUED

The mention of Leicester cinemas brought back some memories. When the family moved to Leicester from the South in 1955, the *Leicester Mercury* advertised 29 cinemas, listed alphabetically from the Aylestone to the Westleigh. There was a cinema in Ratby, just outside the City, which was destroyed by fire in 1954 and never reopened as a cinema. Therefore 1955 appears to have been the peak year for cinema operations in the City. Half of these cinemas had closed by 1961 and a question was asked in Parliament about it. The arrival of ITV in the Midlands in the summer of 1956 must have had a considerable influence on the industry. Closures continued over the years. The last two City centre cinemas, Odeon and ABC, closed in the late 1990s. The arrival of the Multiplexes around this time seems to have finished the closures started by ITV in 1956.

The Cameo in High Street was my favourite cinema in the City. It had operated in the City since before the First World War under various names such as Arcadia and Imperial. It was originally a news theatre – all seats 1/6 (7½p) before 3pm but had turned over to normal films by the autumn of 1959. It showed a wide range of mainly older films and including some foreign films made by directors such as Kurosawa, Fellini and Bergman. It closed in the mid-1970s despite a petition and was turned into the Cascades Bingo Hall. After this closed, the building sold computers but eventually the main auditorium was demolished, leaving just the distinctive entrance hall. I have many happy memories of Saturday afternoons at the Cameo.



The entrance is all that's left of the Cameo Leicester

Ian Patterson

## PALACE CEFN MAWR

I have managed to find out for you the exact date the fire that destroyed the Palace cinema, Cefn Mawr, started. This short report appeared in the *Wrexham Leader* newspaper dated 15 August 1967.

### Police probe cinema fire

*The Palace Cinema, Cefn Mawr, derelict for a number of years, was destroyed in a blaze that raged all Sunday night. Three fire engines from Wrexham were at the scene until 8:30 yesterday morning. No-one was injured and police are making enquiries into the cause.*

So the fire started on Sunday 13 August 1967 and continued until Monday morning 14 August 1967. I was brought up in Wrexham and know the district well, of course.

Gareth Snowden-Davies

**Editor's Note:** This is one of the unknown dates on p8 last Bulletin.



## BETTER THAN ANY MULTIPLEX!

The new cruise ship being built for Saga, the *Spirit of Discovery*, is to be fitted out with a most sumptuous cinema/theatre. It will accommodate over 400 in a raked, curved seating layout. There is a very wide screen with tabs and classic ante-proscenium and ceiling coved lighting. The artist's impression conveys absolute luxury, good taste and refinement. There is no Multiplex that can match this.

Edward Huggins

## THANKS

To all who attended the recent CTA trips North by North East and the AGM weekend in the South Wales Eastern Valleys. We would like to say thank you so much for your patience, understanding and kind offers of help in negotiating the not always obvious obstacles when trying to get around with a wheelchair and, as it was for the valleys trip, only one working hand each.

If you were on both trips, you may have noticed that in between the North by North East trip and the Welsh trip, Joy had a planned operation on her left wrist, which left her with an immobilised hand, which also meant no driving. It's at times like these, that you need a distraction and what better distraction than a CTA visit and AGM?

Here's hoping that by the next visit we'll have a greater complement of hands and for John with even more physio and a bit of luck, maybe stronger working legs.

Update: At the time of writing (early July), Joy's wrist is recovering well and she was back driving again in just over three weeks from the op. John's continued hard work and physio seems to be paying dividends and, more and more, a walking stick is taking the place of the wheelchair.

We would also like to include a special thank you to the trip organisers, David (North By North East) and Ray and John (South Wales Eastern Valleys) for their help and consideration regarding accessibility to the various venues visited – it was very much appreciated.

Joy and John Surtees

## GRANADA STOKER

The article on page 5 of the last Bulletin (July/August 2017) about the proposed alterations to the Granada Woolwich, reminded me of some research I started two years ago regarding my family history. My late father Eric Hagon [R] aged just 19 years, served in the Royal Navy as a First Class Stoker during the Second World War. He was a survivor of the Royal Naval Destroyer Gurkha, which was bombed and sunk on its way to Norway.



Looking in the diaries of my Grandfather, it appeared that my father had given an account of his experience to an audience at the Granada Woolwich, so I set about trying to find out more. Clive Polden was very helpful but unfortunately was unable to find anything in the CTA Archive. In July 2016 I wrote to the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust. After scanning through their microfilm archives of the *Kentish Independent* Newspaper, not only did they find the original small article about his appearance at the Granada dated 26 April 1940 but also found the original full-length article published the week previously, after an interview with the paper's reporter. My thanks go to Jonathan Partington and his team at the Heritage Trust. The microfilm copies are too poor to reproduce but for those interested I have re-typed the shorter article below:

### Gurkha Survivor Thrills Cinema Audience

At Woolwich Granada on Friday night a surprise appearance was made by First Class Stoker Eric Hagon, of Kingswood Avenue, Belvedere, 19 year-old survivor of the destroyer Gurkha, which was bombed and sunk on the way to a Norwegian Port. Mr Charles Kohn, Granada Manager, introduced Stoker Hagon and also presented him with a watch on behalf of Granada Theatres. Stoker Hagon gave an account of his experiences, which was published in last week's Kentish Independent.

Note: A picture of my father on board a Royal Navy ship with a GB (Kalee) portable 35mm projector designated N for Navy, appears in the letters page of Bulletin Vol 48 No 2 March/April 2014.

Richard Hagon

## ANOTHER BIRTHDAY

Another 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of note celebrates the release of *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and the creator of the famous record cover, Peter Blake, has marked the event by producing a similar collage of show business celebrities, on this occasion posing in front of the Chiswick Empire:

[tinyurl.com/yb6m4lsj] & [tinyurl.com/y7trzugg]

1967 also saw the publication of Len Deighton's *London Dossier* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books). A trendy tome very much of its time but offering a fascinating insight into 'swinging London'; most of the book consists of 'surveillance reports' written by popular journalists and columnists of the day. Cinemas are mentioned in the following sections:

**Teenagers** – Jane Wilson (freelance writer in 1967) p.32

"Cinemas popular with Young Londoners are the King's Road Classic and the Paris Pullman in Drayton Gardens, where there is a remarkable tradition of audience participation during bad films. There is also the Hampstead Everyman – though it does tend to show the Maxim Gorky Trilogy once every three months – the two excellent Academy Cinemas in Oxford Street and the arty-tarty National Film Theatre on South Bank."

**Self-indulgence** – Godfrey Smith

(editor of the *Sunday Times Magazine* in 1967) pp.107, 112

"...on the corner [of Shepherd Street is] the refurbished Curzon Cinema, long renowned for the most comfortable snogging seats in London; now an inviting confection of black glass and Monica Vitti films."

"...there are also home movies in which J Arthur Rank is now doing a brisk business. You can hire a projector and operator for about £10 [£166 in 2017] a show through a photographic dealer. A black-and-white feature film costs about £6 [£100 in 2017], colour £9-10 [£150-£166 in 2017], cartoons between 12/6 [£10 in 2017] and 25/- [£20 in 2017]."

**Children** – Drusilla Beyfus

(associate editor of the *Weekend Telegraph* in 1967) pp.138-139

"...what about the odd afternoon or evening which needs to be filled in with some spontaneous activity? Try the Studio One and Two cinemas, which have a policy aimed at a 'family' audience. London has several news and cartoon cinemas that are particularly enjoyable for both young children and their parents. Because no item in the programme is longer than about ten minutes, the young person in question can be whipped out smartly when boredom strikes, without feeling that he or she is missing the remainder of a big show. Cinerama with its 3-D colour programme is a reliable fill-in for a wet afternoon."

I was a student in London during 1968-1969 and spent many happy hours in the "arty-tarty" National Film Theatre. My first cinema experience down there, however, was a salutary one – an expedition to the Curzon (an epic trek from Kentish Town to Mayfair) where I saw *Belle de Jour* and which cost me an arm and a leg... More modest venues – The Tolmer, Forum (Kentish Town) and ABC (Essex Road) – were the order of the day after that, though I did save up to see *2001...* at the Cinerama (Old Compton Street).

Terry Hanstock

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# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

## 1912 – 105 years ago

Princes / Monseigneur News Theatre / Jacey, 131 Princes Street, Edinburgh. Opened 28 September 1912.

Architect: RM Cameron. B listed. [Sorry, no photo]

## 1932 – 85 years ago



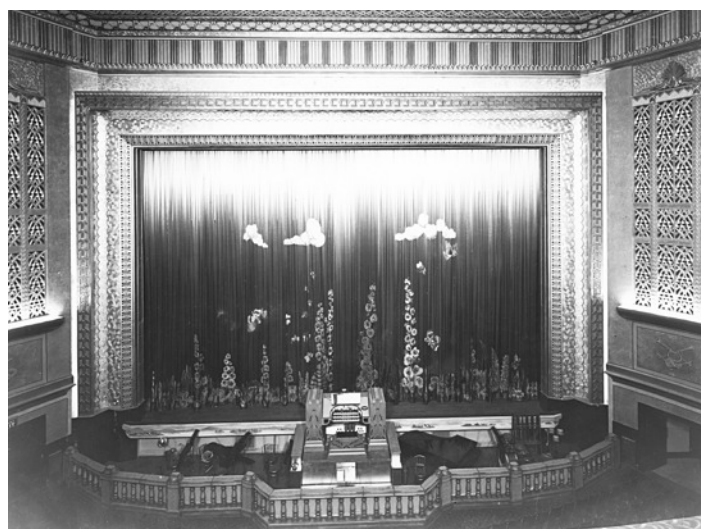
Playhouse 60 West High Street, Peebles. Opened September 1932.  
Architect: Alistair G MacDonald. C(s) listed.



Avenue / Odeon / Coronet 268 Northfields Avenue, Northfields.  
Opened 5 September 1932. Architect: Cecil Masey. Grade II\* listed.



Welfare Hall / Miners, 13 Wind Street, Ammanford.  
Opened 1 October 1932. Architect: J Owen Parry. Grade II listed.



Plaza Mersey Square, Stockport. Opened 7 October 1932.  
Architect: William Thornley. Grade II\* listed. [See events p4.]



Regal 41 Port Street, Evesham. Opened 10 October 1932. [R]  
Architect: Archibald Hurley Robinson. Grade II listed.

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

A History of Cinema Architecture

by Richard Gray

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

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

Special price for CTA members

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Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer

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



## 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?



[Coliseum Coventry](#). Does anyone have further old photographs or early articles on this building [above], which later became part of the Gaumont Palace?

[Wandsworth area pianist](#). Does anyone have a copy of an article published locally in the 1950s or 1960s about a local silent film pianist?

[Cecil Arthur Williamson, architect](#). Does anyone have information on this architect who worked on designs for Odeon cinemas?

*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.

## MEMBERSHIP

### NEW MEMBERS

Listed in order of joining, we send the following new members of the CTA a very warm welcome: Brian D Hopper, Eric WD Turland, David Taylor, Roger Collins, Brian D Wingrad, Rama Muraleetharan and David A Watts.

### DONATIONS

We are pleased that we are able to send our sincere thanks to these members who kindly included a donation to our funds when they renewed their subscriptions: IE Barrow, AC Bater, HD Behr, IJ Bellion, RJ Buckler, RA Buckley, MJ Burke, J Clarke, M Collins, DWT Corn, RG Dickson, S Grimes, DN Hammond, AM Harris, TA Harris, PJ Hoare, SP Hobbs, RE Howes, M Hutton, PTL Johnson, AS Kidd, JM Lewis, I Lockie, SD Locking, FWD Manders, JJ McKillop, JH Muir, S Northover, CM Oxley, IJ Patterson, A Philip, D Schofield, JJ Seabrook, BC Sinclair, G Snowden-Davies, PV Stevens, BP Stoveld, JB West, KS Wheelan, JE Williams, D Williams and JN Wilson.

### IN MEMORIAM

Sadly we only recently learned of the passing of Leonard T Belcher MBKS, of Bracknell, who died on 30 November 2016 aged 74. He joined CTA in 1989 and was also a long-standing member of the PPT. Sincere condolences sent to Ann, family and friends.

*Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary*

## INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [ely.ccan.co.uk/content/tag/the-rex-cinema-ely] A page from the Cambridgeshire Community Archive Network on the Rex Ely.
- ★ [www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/52089/Handlist52-Cinema.pdf] A downloadable pdf of sources for the study of cinema.
- ★ [www.calderdale.gov.uk/wwt/sources/themes/cinemas.html] A page on Halifax cinemas.
- ★ [youtu.be/dSxaz9H3nTc] A 6½ minute documentary on an open day at the Regal (ABC) Halifax – see p20.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yc8gs2dg] A link to a Facebook page with pictures of the demolition of the Paramount/Odeon Manchester;  
*sent in by Nick Taylor*
- ★ [youtu.be/8r6DbFtEj\_c] A 5¼ minute video by member John Wojowski on the demolition of the Paramount/Odeon in Manchester.
- ★ [www.filmprojection21.org] is an initiative conceived around the concrete commitment represented by the Charter of Cinematographic Projection in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, uniting those who care about photochemical film projection. *sent in by Robert Holden*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y758u2ed] A page from *Devon Live* with pictures and a short video of the restoration of the Riviera in Teignmouth
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ydg27zg7] A page from the *Coventry Telegraph*: Coventry cinemas we've loved and lost.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9cbcb7] A page from the *Bradford Telegraph & Argus* with 23 current pictures inside the former New Victoria / Odeon taken by an urban explorer.
- ★ [http://tinyurl.com/y9luuwrq] A link to the videos available on the BradfordOne website – the group trying to save the above.
- ★ [youtu.be/iYFeuflB5pw] A 5¼ minute video on the demolition of the Odeon Aylesbury
- ★ [youtu.be/09nKWa8HPzo] A 3D film inside the Cotton Exchange Blackburn. You have to move your mouse to get the camera to move. *sent in by Philip Crompton*
- ★ [youtu.be/ZE8TY3XL7ys] A 2D version of the above visiting more areas of the building. See Newsreel p30.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9c4nbe6] A *Guardian* article – 'How Britain Fell for Wetherspoons' with a few photos. *sent in by Anthony Wills*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ycxslav9] A *Bournemouth Echo* article on the opening of Bournemouth's first Odeon. Pictures and pages from the souvenir brochure. *sent in by John Forster & Philip Stevens*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/k49tzgv] An architectural review in *The Guardian* of the new Storyhouse Chester. Some good pictures. See back page.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9zyuqxr] A page from *Massachusetts Live* on the life of the Paris cinema in Worcester [USA]. Nice Photos.



# STORYHOUSE CHESTER



Storyhouse is a major new civic cultural hub presenting drama, film and literature, housed in the shell of the 1930s Odeon. Storyhouse aims to connect people through storytelling and brings theatre and cinema back to Chester after a decade-long absence.

The building includes a new 800-seat main theatre space, a studio, 100-seat cinema and library with over 700m of shelving. The shelving is arranged over three levels in the old auditorium, with direction notices such as 'Fiction' and 'Philosophy' in the entrance foyer. There is a curved screen of shelving at the rear of the Odeon main space. It uses a dark stained and lacquered plywood carcass to create the Art Deco style. The joinery also includes a routed diamond shape to continue the Art Deco theme. The same finish and diamond shape was used throughout the building, in the bar and restaurant areas, computer benching and even on the lift shaft.

In the stalls area the tables and computers for browsing coexist with a centrally-placed bar serving meals, with one area for more formal dining. One of the best preserved features I noticed was the original stairway to the circle foyer. The entrance to the new theatre is through the proscenium of the Odeon. In the very comfortable new cinema (in the old circle area) there are screen tabs in use. The building is open 12 hours a day. [2514] [www.storyhouse.com]

*Sent in by David Ellis, Terry Hanstock, Richard Lysons & Jeremy Perkins*

