



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

Vol 49 No 5

September / October 2015



The sixteen-screen **Vue** at Cheshire Oaks, which has just installed a giant **IMAX** screen, photographed in July 2007 – see newsreel p14



The **Ritz** at Burnham-on-Sea (Somerset), which is to have a third screen added, photographed in August 2003 – see newsreel p13



INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [www.overthefootlights.co.uk] Free on-line books about the theatre, including an encyclopaedia of theatres in London and South Wales.
- ★ [beyondthepoint.co.uk] The Unseen History of Essex. Scroll down for photos and a short video on the Rio Canvey Island.
Sent in by Ian Levene
- ★ [www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-34000219] An article from the BBC, "Why is the UK still knocking down historic cinemas?" with photos, description and links on 12 cinemas.
Sent in by David Alexander, Robert Holden & Richard Jones

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I'm sorry that this issue is a little thinner than you have been accustomed to recently. Due to bad planning of my holidays, I only had a limited time to prepare this edition. I've held over a few items and I'll include them next time. The holiday season should be over by then and the clocks will be about to go back, so I can spend the darker nights slaving over a hot computer.

I know I've said this before but we're all friends in the CTA. Consequently there is no need to write letters to me that begin, "Dear Sir" or even "Dear Mr Rigby" – just plain "Harry" is perfectly OK.

Some of you will know my penchant for photographing unusual, interesting or amusing signs. I recently had a week in London, mainly to attend a CTA committee meeting. I cycled around and photographed some cinemas I hadn't done before. Here is a sign I saw near the Clapham Picturehouse.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER**

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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BULLETIN: Members are invited to submit items for possible publication to the Bulletin Editor. However, it is stressed that the publication of an item does not necessarily imply that it reflects the views of the Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor. It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise; items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor. Please enclose SAE and state if you require items to be returned, otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.

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

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

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Riverside Road, London, SW17 0BA [www.ludo.co.uk]

VISITS & EVENTS

From Margate to Madrid!

By Adam Unger and Richard Gray
Saturday 7 November at 5:30pm

Two well-known members of the CTA team-up to bring us two different illustrated talks about their favourite subjects, with a connecting theme to spot. An evening assured to bring us varied and interesting discoveries. **Adam Unger will present:**

Julian Leathart, Architect



Dreamland Margate c1980 [from CTA Archive]

A review of the works of the respected architect Julian Leathart (initially partnered by WF Granger) who produced a small clutch of innovatively designed cinema schemes; the best known being the **Kensington Kinema** (1926), now **Odeon** and the listed **Dreamland** (1935) Margate. Both of these are topical because of recent campaigning to save them. Whilst at another cinema in London, he literally raised the roof. Several other of Leathart's significant cinema designs in south west London including the listed **Richmond Kinema** (1930), now **Odeon**. Some non-cinematic schemes will be covered.



Richard Gray will present:

Madrid Cinemas Revisited

The CTA had a memorable visit to Madrid in 1989 just in time to see a cornucopia of cinema buildings, which turned out to be 'unblighted' by any modernism or subdivision. Last year during his travels, Richard revisited many of the cinemas to see how they had changed, taking photos as he found them. His talk will show a selection of photos from the original visit and compare and comment on those taken during his latest visit. It is hoped to also show video clips of the 1989 tour, filmed by CTA member John Fernee.



The Capitol Madrid

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

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

Admission on the door: Members and Guests: £10 each (including wine and light refreshments) Doors open: 5:00pm; start 5:30pm.

Event organiser to contact: Richard Norman, tel: 020 8668 6077, email: [RichardNormanCTA@aol.com]

Members' Slide Show & Social

5:30pm, Saturday 16 January 2016 at The Gallery, Farringdon, London; organised by Richard Norman

Full details will be published in the next issue.

Invitation: This is an invitation for any members who would like to do a short presentation of something cinema related – perhaps some treasures from their private collection or something gathered from the media (including the Internet), or photos from a visit in the UK or abroad. Our members are always interested to see what other enthusiasts have captured and would like to share. Your idea can be easily transformed by us for showing on the screen, with audio if required. Participating members also have free admittance to the show!

If you are interested in participating please contact: Richard Norman by phone: 020-8668 6077 or email: [RichardNormanCTA@aol.com] or letter: 4, Oakhill Lodge, Reedham Drive, Purley, Surrey CR8 4DT.



CTA Film Nites

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

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

Help Wanted

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

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

... more events (non CTA) on page 5

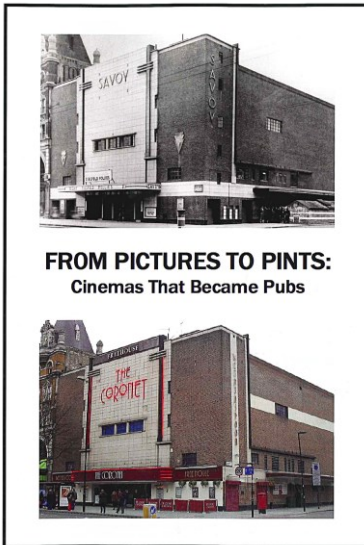
PUBLICATIONS

New Publication

From Pictures to Pints – Cinemas that Became Pubs by Gavin McGrath. A4 paperback, 30 pages, fully illustrated. £4.00 plus postage.

In this well-researched book, the author describes over 100 cinemas that have now become pubs – many of them in the Wetherspoons chain but many others too. Most are illustrated and there are potted histories of each building and its cinematic highlights. There is an appendix of proposed sites. Gavin has set certain criteria for the selection, so a few notable properties – such as the **Regal** Cambridge (which claims to be Britain's largest pub) and the **Forum** Hexham – are not included. Gavin is now working on a sister publication *From Celluloid to Cereal* for which suggestions are invited.

(Copies of the author's earlier book *Cinemas and Theatres of Tower Hamlets* are still available, price £6.99 plus postage)



Recently Published (Reviewed in previous issues)

The Magic Screen – a history of Regent Street Cinema. Various authors. Large format paperback, 178 pages, fully illustrated. £20.00 plus postage.

To celebrate the renovation and re-opening of the **Regent Street Cinema** London, its long and fascinating history has been told for the first time. Built in 1848 for showcasing 'optical exhibitions', in 1896 the theatre was the site of the first UK public performance of the Lumière's Cinématographe. It evolved into a cinema specialising in travelogues and nature films in the 1920s, becoming the **Cameo-Poly** after the Second World War. Regularly hosting premières of continental films, the cinema achieved another first with its screening of *La Vie Commence Demain* in 1951, the first [X]-certificate film in the UK. After mixed fortunes in the 1970s, the cinema closed to the public in 1980. The cinema's recent renovation and re-birth is also featured. This multi-authored volume tells the cinema's history from architectural, educational, legal and cinematic perspectives and is richly illustrated throughout with images from the University of Westminster Archive.

The Auditorium (North Warwickshire) – £12.95 plus postage

Back Numbers Available

BULLETINS

We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 2013 are £4.00 per year (6 issues); individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2014 and 2015 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, 22, 23 & 24, priced £5.00 each, plus postage. We also have just 1 or 2 copies of the extremely rare issues 2, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12 and 13 at £5.00 each plus postage. (If there is more demand than supply, a ballot will be held.)

No 6	£1.50	Television in the Cinema; Atherley Southampton; Hippodrome , Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; ABC in NW London.
No 17	£3.00	Special Issue featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; Ideal Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; Granada Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; Albert Hall Sheffield; Regal Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Gaumont Managers; Carlton Swansea; Committee's Choice.
No 26	£4.50	Paramount Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; Electric Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New Victoria/Apollo ; Whiteladies Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; Torbay Cinema ; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; Apollo Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: Essoldo – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the Essoldo Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New Victoria Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	Beaufort Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934
No 35	£5.00	Holophane lighting; Imitations of Odeon ; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; The Clifton Circuit; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the Electric Palace Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated; Palace Conwy; Cinema Murders; Point Milton Keynes; Carlton Haymarket; Military Cinemas.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two Regals ; Odeon North Finchley; Majestic Oxford; Films at the Royal Albert Hall .

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.



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.

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 on p4.
please add £3.00 for postage.

Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

The Theatres and Concert Halls of Fellner and Helmer by Michael Sell

Published by Entertainment Technology Press
(www.etnow.com), ISBN 978-1-904031-77-2, price £23.95.

You are standing in the main square of a continental town or City. In front of you stands the principal theatre. Placed on an island site, the building is no modest-looking, shrinking violet: with pillars soaring up to meet ornamented pediments and fancy roof domes, all four exterior walls are richly decorated. A great bronze eagle may even be about to take off from the top of the fly tower.

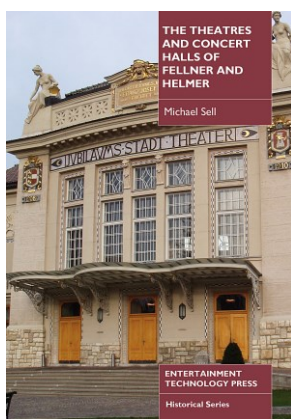
It's quite possible that the theatre you are looking at was designed by the Viennese architectural practice of Fellner and Helmer: examples of their work are to be found across Europe. Michael Sell's book tells the story of how the two men built up their business and compares them with Frank Matcham in Britain: "Matcham and Co and the Atelier Fellner and Helmer were the mammoths of theatre design in the period from 1870-1914," Sell writes in his lively introduction. "The three men were all full of life, sociable, self-assured and great entrepreneurs and promoters of change in their field." Both firms became renowned for speedily delivering the buildings that their clients requested – although Helmer didn't hesitate to tell one theatre owner: "I'm not letting any shop front ruin my façade".

Sell makes the further point that both practices went into business soon after a series of disastrous theatre fires, involving substantial loss of life. "I could no longer spend a night without dreaming of emergency exits, emergency lights and the rest..." Fellner lamented. Similarly in Britain, one of Matcham's first jobs was to improve the fire precautions at the **Elephant and Castle Theatre** (later redesigned as the **ABC/Coronet**).

Much of the book is devoted to an illustrated gazetteer, which contains extensive detail about each of Fellner and Helmer's completed theatres. Unbuilt projects are included too – one of these, intriguingly, was a design for a grandiose opera house in New York. Some of the illustrations, particularly of auditoria, could usefully be a little larger – Fellner and Helmer's theatres were richly decorated internally as well as externally and details of plasterwork, murals etc are sometimes difficult to see. However, bigger illustrations would have increased the size and price of the book and much additional pictorial material can easily be found on the web.

This book, the result of five years' painstaking work, may not be about cinemas in particular but it will be of great value to anyone interested in the history of entertainment buildings in general.

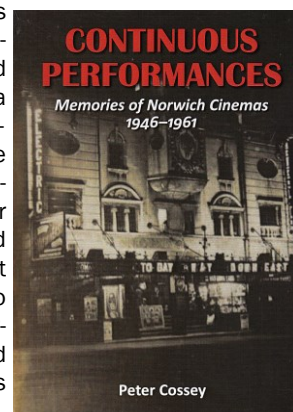
Giles Woodforde



Continuous Performances – Memories of Norwich Cinemas 1946-1961 by Peter Cossey

A5 paperback, published by [www.thenorwichmovieshop.com] available on-line or their shop, 11 St Gregory's Alley NR2 1ER price £12.00 + £3 postage; ISBN 978-1-326-37259-0

This is one man's story of what it was like to experience the magic of the pictures at a time when few people had television sets and a trip to the cinema was like stepping into another world – full of fun, where the stars could be handsome cowboys or strange creatures from far-off places. While other books have reported what others said over the years, Peter tells it straight because he was there. There are also chapters on the 13 cinemas in Norwich, illustrated with b/w photos and appendices listing some of the films they showed and on 3D and widescreen, together with a useful index.



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 CINEMA MUSEUM, LONDON

See the website [www.cinemamuseum.org.uk] for full details of their programme of events. Tel: 020 7840 2200.

The Master's House, 2 Duggard Way, London, SE11 4TH

THE PLAZA, STOCKPORT

Friday 9 October Jamaica Inn (1938) [PG]

Friday 23 October A Nightmare on Elm Street (1984) [18]

All at 2:30pm & 7:30pm; all seats £6.50, concessions £5.50.

Organ introductions commence 30 minutes before most films.

Organ Coffee Morning: Saturday 10 October, 10-1, admission free

Behind the Scenes Tours on Mondays 19 October & 6 November at 11am; tickets £6, book or simply turn up.

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

COS MUSIC & PICTURE EVENINGS [www.cinema-organs.org.uk]

Friday 23 October David Schuster

At 6:45pm. Admission £4. Further info 07855 546823; refreshments available from 6:15pm and at the interval.

Venue: The Gallery at Alan Baxter's, 75 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EL. See p3 for directions.

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].

31 October The Night of the Hunter (1955) [X]

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

WIDESCREEN WEEKEND

National Media Museum, Bradford – 15-18 October

The full programme was not available as we went to press. It will include *Oklahoma!* and *2001: A Space Odyssey* in 70mm, *How The West Was Won* in 3-strip Cinerama and the digital restoration of the 1962 compilation *The Best of Cinerama*. Weekend passes are now on sale. [www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/film/widescreen-weekend]

SAVING A CENTURY PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

The final showings in the 65-venue tour of the Victorian Society free photographic exhibition *Saving a Century*, curated by noted architectural historian Gavin Stamp, are:

Blackburn Library (September 3 - 30)

Cheltenham Library and The Wilson Art Gallery (October 2 - 31)

Colchester Library (November 3 - 30)

Uxbridge Library (December 4 - 18)

John Rylands Library [Manchester Uni] (January 9 - March 23)

The details are on their website [www.victoriansociety.org.uk]

A MUST for your collection

CINEMAS IN BRITAIN

A History of Cinema Architecture
by Richard Gray

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

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

Special price for CTA members
£29.50 + £6.00 postage from
Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer
34 Pelham Road, Wood Green, London, N22 6LN
(Publisher's price £45)

CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II* Listed

A revised application has been presented which ameliorates some deficiencies of the original scheme relating to proposed alterations to the **Avenue** in London's Northfields area. The Association has been represented at a meeting with the local conservation officer and the applicant; a further joint consultation is likely. See p6 last Bulletin.



Antic Limited was recently due to submit planning and listed building consent applications relating to the **Granada / EMD** at Walthamstow, although it is not known if concerns over joint operation as a hostelry and drama space have yet been satisfactorily resolved with the proposed tenant, Soho Theatre Company. *Photo above taken April 2004.*

Planning and listed building consents have also been sought for the **Dreamland** complex in Margate.

Grade II Listed



In Brighton, an application has been tabled for the replacement of the **Astoria** with a tripartite, seven-storeyed, structure. Consideration is being given to requesting salvage of architectural elements and an interior photographic survey. *Photo above taken March 2009*

Concern arises over the recent closure of the **Ritz** in Grays. Often overlooked in favour of its more celebrated neighbour, the **State**, the **Ritz** is an impressive structure in its own right, boasting an admirable auditorium. Picture on front cover of last Bulletin.

Partial demolition of **Smart's Picture Palace / Rex / Essoldo** in London's Bethnal Green has been approved in order for construction of residential units to be undertaken, despite representations from the CTA and other bodies. It will be recalled that an outcome of this ilk had been anticipated following the rejection of the listing application for the cinema. Picture on p5 Bulletin 49/3.



The **Regal/Odeon** in Darlington has been recognised by local planners as integral to the appearance of a significant group of buildings in the Northgate Conservation Area; thus the opportunity is being taken to request that the protected purview be extended in order to encompass the entire structure. *Photo above taken September 2006.*

A submission has been registered for change of use of the ruins of the **National Picture Theatre** in Hull to an al fresco dining area for the adjacent Swan Inn. The local group wishing to retain the site as a war memorial remains active. See p20 last Bulletin.

Hammersmith and Fulham Council has refused planning permission for the development propounded for **Pyke's Cinematograph Theatre** in London's Shepherd's Bush, previously outlined in this column.

Another revised application relating to the **Odeon** in Kensington was due to be heard recently. The Association has again submitted its views; local campaigners were also due to express their disquietude over various aspects of the scheme. See p6 last Bulletin.

It has been proposed that the Crossrail 2 project should employ the site of the **Columbia/Curzon** Soho in London as a station. Although of questionable architectural merit, the cinema is a valuable and substantially utilised amenity; thus the CTA will support the growing campaign for its retention on this basis.

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.

WANDERING TO WINCHESTER

By Ian Meyrick

A report of the CTA visit on 20 June,
organised by David Trevor-Jones and Richard Norman

The cover of the notes booklet for the CTA's first visit to Winchester, ancient capital of Wessex and England, proudly displayed a full-colour illustrated poster issued by the London and South Western Railway in the early years of the twentieth century. Sadly, the LSWR Company's modern day successor nearly derailed the trip from the outset with delays and over-running engineering on some services carrying CTA members. Despite this, Mervyn's Coaches (driven by Mervyn himself in a monogrammed driver's cap) managed to pick the group up in two tranches and keep us to our schedule.



The Everyman/Screen in Winchester

Our first visit was to the **Screen** in Southgate Street. Opened in 1996 and subsequently taken over by the **Everyman** Group, this comfortable two-screen cinema was created within the former Guards' Chapel in the now-closed Peninsula Barracks. A listed building, the two back-to-back cinemas (214 and 176 seats) have exposed brick walls and timber rafters, with raked floor, spacious seating and good-sized screens. Projection is by Sony 4k digital projection from a central projection room. Although we are now very familiar with cinemas being converted to churches, the conversion of chapels and churches to cinemas has of course been a feature from the earliest days of film presentation.



The Palace Alton

Back onto the coach and off to Alton's **Palace** Cinema, where we were welcomed by the owner, Mr Raj Jeyasingam, former manager of the bingo at the **Granada** Tooting. Opened as the **Picture Theatre** in 1914, with a typical semi-circular frontage over a divided shop-front style entrance, it converted to sound in 1931. It was refurbished four years later and renamed the **Palace**. The current



An old postcard of the Palace Alton [Tony Moss Collection]

bland frontage is typical of modernisation schemes in the 1960s and probably dates from then. Early in the 1970s, part-time bingo was introduced and, after closure during 1984-88, the circle was extended forward to provide a 111-seat cinema, with bingo in the front stalls area. The present owner, Raj, told us that he bought the building in 1995 and in 2003 introduced a second 60-seater screen in the unused rear stalls area. The demand for bingo has reduced to such an extent that the bingo operation was due to close the week after our visit. Raj plans to wall-off the two screens and sell the rear part of the building for redevelopment, continuing to run the two screens as cinemas.



Part of the CTA group having lunch in St John's House

All aboard for Winchester! Our next stop was the oldest building on the tour, **St John's House**, Broadway, a Grade I Georgian building with a hall for assemblies, concerts and banquets on the top floor. When this was heightened, false windows were painted on to preserve the proportions of the building – one is painted slightly open to reveal a pot of paint and brush! Opened as the **Palace Theatre**, a ciné-variety hall, by brothers John and James Simkins in 1910, it closed in 1914 to make way for the Simkins' new venture, the **Theatre Royal**. The top floor is now a banqueting suite, having fulfilled a number of functions over the years, including housing a historic battle enactment show including primitive animatronics. Lucky, original decorative plaster decoration survived all this excitement, including the projection ports for a single-projector set-up. Happily, we were able to combine our physical and aesthetic needs at the same time, as lunch was provided here.



The Guildhall Winchester

Now on foot, we headed up the hill, admiring the Grade II 1873 **Guildhall** (listed in earlier Kine Yearbooks as a venue for non-flam film) and catching a glimpse of the cathedral environs, en-route to



The exterior and interior of the **Picture House Winchester** c1925 by John Maltby [Tony Moss Collection]

the former **Picture House** in the High Street. Another building that looks old and fits in well with the historic surroundings, Winchester's first purpose-built cinema was in fact opened in 1914, having been designed with a mock-Tudor frontage. Seating 450 patrons in stalls and balcony, it was a long, narrow building. Enlarged in 1926 by lengthening the auditorium still further, in 1929 it also had the distinction of being the first Winchester venue to screen a talkie. In November 1935 it became part of the Odeon circuit, which had also taken over the **Regal** (long demolished) the same year. Obviously surplus to requirements, it was closed the next year and has been used as a shop for many years. As Superdrug, the upper level was boarded-off and used for storage, so there was little to be seen for cinema buffs. This meant, however, that money was not wasted on modernisation and the current occupier, fashion chain Jack Wills, now uses the upstairs as a sales floor, with a rotunda revealing a view of the dome above from the ground floor. Original plasterwork and a tiny projection box, set impossibly high and with a remarkably short throw, can now be seen. This is a very good transformation of this interesting building.



The **Picture House Winchester** in March 2009



The former **Ritz Winchester** in March 2009

The next visit was an exterior-only view of the former **Ritz** in Middle Brook Street. This was opened by **ABC** in April 1940 with a capacity of 1,035 in the stalls and 435 in the circle and very plain décor.

Lasting only 20 years as a cinema, it closed in 1960 with the film *Ice Palace*, being a relatively early casualty of TV. It then became Lucky Seven Bingo (Ladbroke's) and later, the Top Rank Bingo Club. In its current guise as Winchester Family Church (since our visit renamed Hope Church), the already plain interior has been painted in white, retaining the basic shape of the auditorium and balcony but neutralising any remaining features. The auditorium can now accommodate 700 and offers state-of-the-art AV facilities.



The former **Empire Corn Exchange / Regent Winchester**

Another 'walk-by' was the **Regent Theatre**. This splendid porticoed building in Jewry Street was originally built as a Corn Exchange and in October 1909 opened as an early cinema. In 1915 it was adapted for theatre as the **Empire Corn Exchange** and then became the **Regent Theatre**. From 1917 it was the **Regent Picture Theatre** and after a ten-year stint as a dance hall (1922–1933) ran for two years as the **Regent Cinema**. In 1935 it closed and was converted to a public library, which it still is, albeit styled **Winchester Discovery Centre**. The auditorium ran across the back of the building parallel to Jewry Street but no traces of its previous cinema use remained after conversion to a library. A Performance Hall has been added recently, with retractable seating for 180. A film club meets here regularly, using DVD.



The exterior and interior of the **Theatre Royal Winchester**

The highlight of the Winchester tour was the **Theatre Royal**, where we were welcomed by cinema and theatre historian (and long-term volunteer at the theatre) Phil Yates. This Grade II listed building has an interesting history, having started life as the Market Hotel in 1850, conveniently located by the cattle market and the **Corn Exchange**. In 1913 it was acquired by the Simkins brothers (who we have met at the **Palace Theatre** and who were also involved with the **Regent**). They built an auditorium and stage block in the stable yard, enclosed by the existing frontage and side wing of the hotel, which still remain quite recognisable from their former life. The architect was FGM Chancellor, former assistant to Frank Matcham and by then principal of Frank Matcham and Co. It was designed as a ciné-variety house with barrel-vaulted roof and balcony curving round to the stage. The theatre opened in 1914. Both interior and exterior retain original attractive plaster and stucco decoration. Full-time cinema use was introduced in 1922. County Cinemas bought the theatre in 1934 and it became part of Odeon when County merged with them. Rank leased it to independents from 1954 and the owners on closure in 1974 were Star Cinemas of Leeds. After a battle against proposed demolition, the theatre passed to a trust and re-opened for live shows in 1978. In 1989, a 35mm projector was installed and regular showings introduced into the programme under the name **Cinema Royal**. Since the closure under Star, a number of major developments have taken place, notably enlarging the stage and flytower to enable full theatrical use and, more recently, redevelopment of the front of house and stage facilities by Burrell Foley Fischer during 1996-2001. This attractive little theatre is now a comfortable and popular venue for live performances of all kinds.



The exterior and interior of the **Plaza** Romsey

Our final visit of the day was to Romsey, where the 1931 **Plaza** cinema originally had 400 seats in stalls and balcony. It went over to bingo in the late 1960s before that too closed at the start of the 1980s. The freehold of the empty building was purchased by Romsey Amateur Operatic and Drama Society in 1982 and reopened as a 246-seat theatre in January 1984. Major work had been carried out in the meantime – principally the raising of the stalls and stage to create a single tiered auditorium, releasing space at the old stalls level for a green room and dressing rooms. A busy programme of home-produced and touring shows keeps the theatre very much alive, although we discussed the possible opportunities for some film in the future.

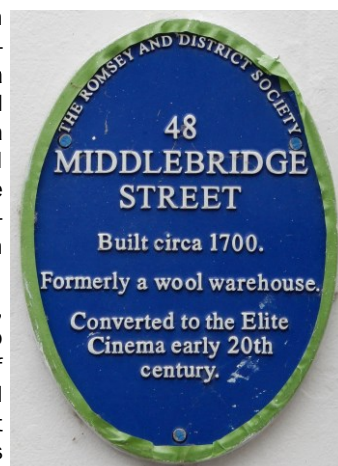


The **Corn Exchange** [top] and former **Elite** [bottom] in Romsey

Two other former film venues in Romsey were seen from the outside – the **Corn Exchange Cinema** (closed 1913), now a bank and the **Elite Cinema** (1913-31), now a residential property. Situated down a very narrow street, the arrival of our coach caused consternation to onlookers and even fury from one!

So ended a very enjoyable day, with plenty to see and a chance to get a feel for the historic city of Winchester. Our thanks to David and Richard for their excellent organisation and to Mervyn for his immaculate and fearless driving. Full acknowledgment is made here

to the authors of the excellent notes booklet, from which most of the historical detail in this report has been taken.



Plaque on the former **Elite**

The Projected Picture Trust

Dean Clough Mills, HALIFAX, HX3 5AX

The Projected Picture Trust exists to locate and preserve projectors and related film equipment, both professional and domestic. Since 1978 enthusiastic volunteers have been happy to help restore these items and so preserve **THE MAGIC OF CINEMA**.

The Trust provides help and assistance to non-commercial community cinemas and museums exhibiting film related artefacts.

The Museum of Cinema Technology has perhaps the largest collection of all types of film equipment in the UK. The Data Archive holds over 3,000 items including press cuttings, manuals and film related technical documents. We are presently looking to strengthen our management team...

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU ARE ABLE TO HELP
or if you would like to become a member only.

contact@ppttrust.org

www.ppttrust.org

JOHN D CLARK

By Barry Band – Blackpool Entertainment Historian

From being a 14-year-old monitor in the Saturday morning club at the Hull **Odeon** there was only one job for John Clark. He was going to be the smiling man in the Saturday night suit, welcoming patrons in the foyer. Ambition was delayed because on leaving Hull Grammar School the RAF claimed him for National Service and it was a couple of years before John was taken on as a 20-year-old Rank trainee in West Yorkshire.



The **Odeon** Halifax in August 2011

John, who died aged 80 in March, 2015, after a fall at his home in Bishopsthorpe, York, made an early impression as assistant manager at the Halifax **Odeon** in 1955. He promoted Danny Kaye's *The Court Jester* by placing an ad in the personal column of the local newspaper, stating "Feeling gloomy? Phone the Court Jester on this number." Callers were told a joke and advised to have more laughs by seeing the film. It got John noticed by the Quigley Awards people in Hollywood and in the next few years he received several citations for his promotional ideas.

Typical was his Bradford **Odeon** promotion in 1956 of the musical *Oklahoma*. John got the City's dairies to place placards on the milk delivery trucks with the slogan "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning", followed by an invitation to a lovely evening at the **Odeon**.

Among John's placements in 1958 was assistant manager at the Blackpool **Odeon**, reputed to be the biggest in the country when opened in 1939. The manager of the 3,088-seat venue was Rupert Todd, a legendary Rank showman who was often the champion manager in the north region. John helped him organise a Dickensian characters dress contest to promote the Ralph Thomas – Betty Box film *A Tale of Two Cities*.

Back in Yorkshire the same year he became the youngest Rank group manager in the north, aged 24, at the Leeds **Gaumont**, followed by the **Majestic**.



At the **Gaumont** Camden Street, Liverpool, manager John D Clark presents bouquets to Samantha Eggar and producer Betty E Box before the 1962 screening of *The Wild and the Willing*.

His next move was in 1961 to manage the Liverpool **Gaumont** (Camden Street), where in 1962 he was named as Rank's champion showman in the north region, ahead of his old mentor Rupert Todd.

John returned to Leeds in 1963 to manage the Headrow **Odeon**, where pop music one-nighters were often staged. There were dramas! A Beatles show in November 1963 made national headlines. Scores of girls jumped into the orchestra pit and one girl made it to the stage and touched Paul McCartney. A Roy Orbison concert was halted by fire in the kitchen. Chuck Berry collapsed during his act. But a Rolling Stones concert passed without trouble. More to John's musical taste were concerts by Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, Tony Bennett and John Dankworth.

In 1964 John took himself on a tour of the United States, seeing cinemas in cities and small towns and later said he was amazed by the amount of food and drink that could be consumed by American audiences. He visited a multi-screen drive-in and thought it wouldn't happen in Britain. A highlight of his American tour was meeting Stan Laurel in Hollywood.



White tie and tail suit for manager John D Clark at a midnight charity première of *Thunderball* at the **Odeon**, The Headrow, Leeds in February 1966. John [L] welcomes Sir Leonard and Lady Ropner.



The **Odeon**, The Headrow, Leeds in November 2000

In September 1968, Rank announced the Headrow **Odeon** was to be converted into a twin cinema, involving a period of closure. It signalled another move for John Clark, as successor to super showman Rupert Todd at the Blackpool **Odeon**. This handsome building on Dickson Road, designed by W Calder Robinson and Robert Bullivant from the practice of Harry Weedon, had undergone a few changes since John's short residency in 1958. A 1964 refurbishment had brought the décor and comfort level up to date and the number of seats had been reduced to 2,744.

A big resort cinema was very different to a City venue. For about five months of the year audiences were boosted by an ever-changing run of holidaymakers but in winter a small resident population had to be coaxed out on wet and windy nights. John rose to the challenge but times were changing and conversion to a triple was rushed through by Rank in 1975 when the Leeds-based Star Group started to build a four-studio venue on the Promenade.

MISCELLANY

DOUBLE TROUBLE

Perak Tengah District Council in Malaysia has ordered Lotus Five Star Cinemas not to sell double seats to unmarried couples. The decision only applies to Muslim cinema-goers.

Asia One – 23 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

ARCHITECTURAL PLAN ARCHIVE

More than 4,000 architectural plans of UK venues held by The Theatres Trust are to be catalogued for the first time. The project aims to make sure the documents can be easily accessed by anyone interested in theatre history.

The Stage – 30 July; sent in by Peter Good

BOX OFFICE GOLD

A collection of 196,000 film posters from more than 44,000 films was expected to fetch \$20m at an auction in California. In another auction at Bonhams, an original drawing of *Star Wars* film poster is part of a collection of 200 posters valued at £500,000.

Daily Telegraph – 27 June, 15 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

HAMMER HOUSES OF HORROR?

A planning application is being made to turn Bray Studios in Berkshire, where the iconic Hammer Horror films were made, into 25 new homes. Down Place House will be partially demolished and a two-storey extension added. The frontage and the original entrance lobby will be restored. Other studio buildings will go. The last remaining tenants left the site in 2014.

Maidenhead Advertiser – 23 July; sent in by R David Simpson

DEADLY NITRATE

A three-day festival showing exclusively nitrate film has been held at the **Dryden Theatre** in Rochester, New York. It is one of only three venues in the US licensed to screen the highly inflammable nitrate film. The opening film was a 1947 print of *Casablanca*, shown in ten-minute 1,000ft reels on projectors dating from 1951. Three projectionists were on duty, one with his hand on the projector dowsers, one preparing the second machine and a third rewinding. The projection room was equipped with sprinklers, reinforced steel doors and a network of ceiling cables that control two guillotine-like steel gates over the portholes.

Source unknown; sent in by Carl Chesworth

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE



The Vienna State Opera House in May 2012

Paramount Pictures teamed up with **IMAX** to transform the 19th Century **Vienna State Opera House** into a cinema for the première of *Mission Impossible Rogue Nation* on 23 July; the movie was largely filmed in the Austrian capital. The project involved fitting two **IMAX** digital projectors in the Emperor's Box at the rear of the auditorium. Just like a normal **IMAX** cinema, both projectors were used at the same time to enhance the brightness of the image. A 56ft by 37ft curved screen was installed in front of the stage. However, the horseshoe-shaped venue held its own challenges; different speakers to normal had to be used. 1,000 guests attended the showing. A time-lapse video of the transformation can be seen at: [youtu.be/n8iXw-bOkhM].

Projectorpoint – 8 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth



John Clark with Dudley Moore and Richard Griffiths in the promotion of *Blame It On The Bellboy* in 1992.



John Clark [L] 'hams it up' in a helmet with comedy star Jack Douglas for the promotion of *Carry On Columbus* in 1992.



John Clark (he dropped the initial D in later years) retires from his 27-year management of the Blackpool Odeon in 1996.

John and his partner Helen, an anaesthetist at Blackpool Victoria Hospital, became known to friends as adventurous travellers. When he took early retirement in 1996 at the age of 61, they went even further afield and bought a house in Napier, New Zealand, spending their winters there and summers in the Blackpool area.

When Helen died in 2011, John returned to Yorkshire to live in his parents' old house. He had no children and is survived by his younger brother David, of Canterbury and several nieces and nephews.

The Blackpool **Odeon**, which he had managed for 27 years, closed in December, 1998, as a new ten-screen **Odeon** opened in Rigby Road.

The old **Odeon**, a Listed Building (Grade II) is still packing 'em in – but not with movies. It is *Funny Girls*, a famous transvestite-cabaret theatre with the original stage and proscenium. As John might have commented on seeing the queues: "That's show business."

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. 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]

ABINGDON (Oxon)

The Council has turned down all bids to run a new two-screen cinema at the **Guildhall**. It has instead commissioned architects to draw up new plans to regenerate the building.

Oxford Mail – 6 July

ALDERSHOT (Hants)



The new owners of the former **Empire/Odeon** say it will be transformed into an entertainments venue with “no expense spared”. Refurbishment was due to start in late August with completion hoped for by Christmas. The name will revert back to **Empire**. It opened in October 1930 and was renamed **Odeon** in January 1964. It closed in October 1981 and was then used as a church but they moved out in August 2015. {4428} *photo taken April 2006*.

Aldershot News & Mail – 30 July, 6 August; sent in by Ken Roe

ANDOVER (Hants)

Odeon has apologised after eight pensioners were stuck in a lift for four hours, instead of watching *La Bohème*. The four-screen cinema (ex **Reel**) is situated above an Asda supermarket. The company confirmed that a similar accident happened a year ago. Since then the lift has been upgraded and the number of service visits increased.

Southampton Daily Echo, Andover Advertiser – 20 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

ASHFORD (Kent)

Plans for a ‘boutique’ cinema in Elwick Road in the town centre have gone on public display. No operator or size of venue have been named; earlier proposals suggested five screens. There is already a twelve-screen **Cineworld** on the outskirts of the town.

Kentish Express – 23, 30 July, 6 August; *KM Extra* – 5 August

BANBURY (Oxon)

The building that houses the two-screen **Odeon** was auctioned on 9 July. It sold for £2.2m, which was above the guide price of £1.9m. The operation of the cinema is unaffected by the sale; the lease goes on until 2032 with a right to renew for a further 10 years. The cinema opened as the **Regal** in October 1940 with 897 seats. By 1946 it was operated by Southan Morris and it became an **Essoldo** in May 1956. In 1972 it was taken over by **Classic** and they twinned it. {24126}

Banbury Guardian – 30 June; *Banbury Cake* – 2 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth; photo [top next column] taken February 2004

BARRY (Vale of Glamorgan)

Developers have until 30 September to submit proposals for a multiplex cinema at the Innovation Quarter. The last cinema, the **Theatre Royal** closed in 2008 and was demolished in 2012.

Barry & District News – 2 July



The Odeon (ex **Regal** / **Essoldo** / **Classic**) Banbury

BIRMINGHAM (NEC)

The new eleven-screen **Cineworld** is due to open in October. A recruitment day for prospective employees has been held.

Muslim Weekly – 7 August

BLACKPOOL (Lancs)



The former **ABC**, last used as **Syndicate** nightclub, has finally been demolished. The delays cost the Council £116,000; the sum represents the loss of income due to the site’s failure to be converted into a 59-space car park. The cinema was rebuilt in 1963 with live theatre capabilities; these were lost when it was tripled in 1981. Films ceased in December 1998. {25501}

Blackpool Gazette – 6 July; photo [as **Syndicate** nightclub] taken June 2009

BLAENAU FFESTINIOG (Gwynedd)

Grants totalling £90,000 have enabled a digital cinema installation in the old Magistrates’ Court building. The operator said it is not intended to develop the venue as a full-time cinema but rather an “art house” style.

Caernarfon & Denbigh Herald – 11 June; *Cambrian News* – 18 June

BLYTH (Northumberland)

The conversion of the grade II listed former **Wallaw** into a Wetherspoon’s pub was highly commended at the Campaign for Real Ale [CAMRA] and English Heritage pub design awards. {1826}

The Journal (Newcastle) – 7 July; *News Post Leader* – 9 July; sent in by Frank Manders

BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)

Plans for a multiplex as part of the town’s regeneration scheme have been dropped due to lack of public interest.

West Sussex Gazette – 8 July

BOLTON

A giant crane has been brought in from Poland to work on the new nine-screen 1,200-seat **Light** cinema, part of the Market Place development. It is expected to open on 18 December. The auditoria will range from 80 to 270 seats.

Bolton News – 27 June; *Bolton Journal* – 16 September

BRADFORD (West Yorks)

Trustees at the **National Media Museum** have objected to plans [trailed on p18 of the last Bulletin] for a new six-screen cinema as part of the Broadway development. They claim it will jeopardise the future of their venue.

Telegraph & Argus (Bradford) – 18 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BURNHAM-ON-SEA (Somerset)

A new 77-seat third screen costing £150,000 is to be added this autumn to the **Ritz**. Last year it celebrated the tenth anniversary of its reopening. It is unclear where the new screen will be; the two existing screens in the former circle have 125 and 98 seats. A social club operates in the former stalls. Photo on front cover. {3291}

Burnham & Highbridge Weekly News – 16 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BURY (Lancs)

The Compton organ from the **Art Cinema** is currently being installed at Llanelli Presbyterian Church in South Wales. It lived in the cinema from 1933 until the 1960s then was put in storage until 2008.

Bury Times – 13 August; sent in by Philip Crompton

CAMPBELTOWN (Argyll & Bute)

Only £2,000 more needs to be raised to complete the restoration of the A-listed **Picture House**. With more than £3m already in the pot, a reopening date has been set for February 2017. Tenders have been received and work is due to start in November or December. {16090}

Campbeltown Courier – 12 June

CANTERBURY (Kent)



The **Electric** (1911) has re-opened again, this time as the Gourmet Burger Kitchen. This is quite a large chain, not just in London. The interior is intact but less of an early cinema feel as it is serving up American burgers as fast as possible, with rather brash décor.

Sent in by Martin Tapsell; photo taken April 2004

CHELTENHAM (Glos)

The art deco 'silver ladies' rescued from the front of the **Gaumont Palace / Odeon** when it was demolished have been given a new home at The Brewery, which houses an eleven-screen **Cineworld**.

Gloucestershire Echo – 23 July; sent in by John Elliot

CHIPPENHAM (Wilts)

Further to my article in the May/June Bulletin, the former **Palace** reopened on 8 August as a nightclub called... The **Palace**. The scaffolding went up about a month ago to repaint the outside and high-light the old **Palace** sign. The inside has been totally revamped and can hold up to 600 people. The manager has said that the new club will be "well run and trouble free" but there is still a lot of opposition from local residents. The one thing that intrigues me is that the old 1920s lamp holder over the **Palace** sign has been retained – it does not work and there has been no other lighting put up to illuminate the signage?

Sent in by David Reeves

CHORLEY (Lancs)

There are concerns that the community cinema at the **Empire** could close if plans for a six-screen **Reel** go ahead. Plans were due to go before councillors in mid-July.

Chorley Citizen – 15 July

COCKERMOUTH (Cumbria)



Smeatons of Cockermouth are inviting offers around £465,000 for the **Grand Theatre**. Restaurant or shop use is envisaged, but Lime-lighting lease the auditorium area with its curved ceiling for another six years. The **Grand** was a theatre with a 25 foot deep stage (although no flytower) dating from 1915, but mostly operated as a cinema, latterly with the Graves circuit booking the films. After closure in 1966 it was converted to retail use. The CTA visited at Easter 1995, when it was a veterinary surgery, now gone. Photos of interior are on the Smeatons website [tinyurl.com/q5qrskd]. {49789}

Sent in by Martin Tapsell; photo is a composite of two taken February 2007

CORBY (Northants)

The six-screen 900-seat **Savoy** opened on 31 July; it is equipped with Dolby Atmos. The first film was *Mission Impossible 5*. It is the fourth cinema in the chain, which has branches in Nottingham, Boston (Lincs) and Worksop (Notts).

Corby Evening Telegraph – 18 June, 2 July

CROOK (Durham)

The group formed to save the former **Empire** has launched an appeal to raise £150,000 to buy the building. Many of the original features are still in place. It is currently used as a motor accessories shop. See p20 Bulletin 49/3. {43148}

Weardale Gazette – 17 June

DARLINGTON

A 24-hour licence has been granted for the new nine-screen **Vue** at the new Oval Centre, despite objections from local residents. The cinema is expected to open in February.

Northern Echo – 16, 29 July

DEAL (Kent)

The campaign group wanting to see the former **Regent** reopen have set up a website [www.reopentheregent.com] to further their cause. It contains a history of the building and many pictures.

East Kent Mercury – 30 July; sent in by Martin Tapsell

DONCASTER (South Yorks)

Savoy Cinemas is to operate the new six-screen 984-seat cinema planned for the Civic and Cultural Quarter. Subject to approval, building will start early next year with completion by the end of 2016.

Doncaster Free Press – 23 July

DORCHESTER (Dorset)

The freehold of the four-screen **Plaza** has been bought by the operator, Adam Cunard. The 1933 building has benefitted from more than £1 investment over the last seven years, including refurbishment of the foyer, re-carpeting and additional sound-proofing. All screens are digital, have air conditioning and have been re-seated with comfortable high-back leather-effect chairs. Further work is planned, including reinstalling tabs in screen ① (the former circle). The cinema is said to be doing better than the recently-opened three-screen **Odeon**. Admission prices are £3.50 at weekends and £2.50 during the week. {15143}

*Dorset Echo – 21 August; photo taken May 2006
additional information from John Pilblad & Mike Whitcombe*



DUNDEE

A former college building in Constitution Road could be converted into a residential development along with a café and gym. The former college lecture theatre would be converted into a small cinema.

Dundee Courier – 11 August

ELLESMERE PORT (Cheshire)

A 55ft by 33ft 225-seat **IMAX** screen has been opened at the 16-screen **Vue** multiplex [ex **Warner Village**] at Cheshire Oaks. {24684}

Ellesmere Port Pioneer – 15 July; Crewe Chronicle – 20 July;

Warrington Guardian – 6 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth; photo on front cover

ENNISKILLEN (County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland)

The former **Ritz** and adjacent Railway Hotel are up for sale for £400,000. The 700-seat cinema opened in 1954 and closed in 1992. Minor improvements were made to the façade ahead of the G8 summit in June 2013 – see p20 Bulletin 47/2. {26719}

Fermanagh Herald – 24 June

ESHER (Surrey)

The grade II listed four-screen **Odeon** closed on 6 August to be converted into an **Everyman** cinema. It will be gutted internally and will reopen “this winter”. The cinema was built for Shipman & King and opened in August 1937 as the **Embassy**; it has had various name changes since. {22712}

Sent in by Tony Duggan & Mike Derriman

EXETER (Devon)



The **Phoenix** on Gandy Street has revealed plans to create a new roof terrace and cinema and increase the seating capacity in the main auditorium by creating a balcony. Other improvements would be made, including new toilets. [www.exeterphoenix.org.uk]

Express & Echo (Exeter) – 29 June; photo taken June 2008

A planning application for a multiplex has been made as part of the redevelopment of the bus station. The City already has a seven-screen **Vue**, a four-screen **Odeon**, a **Picture House** and two arts centres that also show film.

Western Morning News – 13 June



The Regal/George/Vogue in Girvan

GERRARDS CROSS (Bucks)

The **Odeon** closed on 6 August to be converted into an **Everyman** cinema. It will be gutted internally and will reopen “this winter”.

Get Bucks – 17 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Tony Duggan

GIRVAN (South Ayrshire)

The former **Regal/George/Vogue** was due to be auctioned on 4 August with a guide price of £48,000. It was last used for bingo; since this closed, the building has fallen into disrepair.

Carrick Gazette – 8 July; photo [bottom previous column] taken August 2009

GLOUCESTER

The former six-screen **Cannon/MGM/Virgin/UGC/Cineworld** at the Peel Centre is to be converted into three shops. It was replaced by a ten-screen **Cineworld** at Gloucester Quays.

Gloucester Citizen – 13 July

GRANTHAM (Lincs)

The new six-screen **Reel** cinema is now not expected to be completed until the end of 2016; it was originally scheduled for autumn 2015. The £5m development will see 1,037 seats, an increase of around 700 from the existing two-screen cinema, which remains open. A local art group has suggested that the new cinema could include space for exhibiting art.

Grantham Journal – 19 June, 31 July; Grantham Target – 24 June

GRAVESEND (Kent)

Councillors have approved revised plans for the demolition of the former **Gem/Regal** to make way for new homes, a gym, shops and offices. A previous proposal was rejected in March – see p21 Bulletin 4/93. {37338}

Gravesend Messenger – 23, 30 July

GRAYS (Essex)

As reported on p19 of the last Bulletin, Mecca Bingo in the former **Ritz** closed on 19 July. It has now come to light that the building was due to be auctioned on 6 July but was in fact sold prior to the auction. No guide price was given and the identity of the buyer is unknown.

[www.allsop.co.uk]; sent in by R David Simpson

GUERNSEY (Channel Islands)

A revised planning application for a cinema at Admirals Park has been submitted. Permission was granted in 2013 and does not expire for another year but planning laws are expected to change in 2016. The current plans include several possible designs for a cinema, which could have up to 714 seats.

Guernsey Press & Star – 11 July

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD (Herts)

Plans for the Gade Zone include a new eight-screen cinema. Negotiations are taking place with a number of operators. There is already an eight screen **Empire** (ex **Odeon**) on the outskirts of the town.

Berkhamsted & Tring Gazette – 12 August

HEXHAM (Northumberland)

The community-owned **Forum** Cinema has reported that the year ended 31 March 2015 was another successful one. In contrast to the national drop in admissions and takings reported earlier this year (Bulletin 49/2) of 5% and 2.9%, the 208-seat **Forum** reports a 3% increase in admissions to 50,559 whilst turnover was up 6.2% and gross profit increased by 14% to £95,780. Live transmissions of non-film content including ballet, theatre and opera formed a vital part in the success with 10 sold-out shows during the year. Film admissions also increased and, judging by the top ten based on admissions, The **Forum** caters for a wide range of tastes. The cinema has recently developed a three-year renewal plan to ensure its on-going viability. Priority is currently being given to plans to improve the ticket office and café service area in order to ease congestion at busy times.

Sent in by David Williams

IPSWICH (Suffolk)

Empire Cinemas is to operate the new sixteen-screen cinema in the Buttermarket development. **Empire** bought the abandoned former five-screen **Odeon** last year, effectively killing off plans by **Vue** to operate a cinema in the Buttermarket. When the new cinema opens, the former **Odeon** is likely to be sold to the developers of the Buttermarket and it could become a conference centre. There is already an eleven-screen **Cineworld** in the town.

East Anglian Daily Times – 31 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

KEIGHLEY (West Yorks)



I was alarmed to read in the *Keighley News* about a major fire and chemical spillage in a Keighley bingo hall, the Gala in Alice St. (ex **Ritz**). Six fire appliances, 40 firemen and police were in attendance. But then I discovered it was all an elaborate training exercise with fake smoke and no damage whatsoever.

Keighley News – 9 August;
sent in by Martin Tapsell [photo]

KINGSBRIDGE (Devon)

The three-screen **Reel** cinema in the Town Hall has been taken over by Merlin Cinemas on the retirement of the current operators. They have changed the name to **Kings** to avoid any confusion with the circuit of the same name. This brings the total number of Merlin Cinemas to 10, excluding the **Ritz** in Penzance. {9153}

Sent in by Ian Meyrick;
photo [R] taken June 2008

KIRKCALDY (Fife)



The B-listed former **ABC** and the adjacent YMCA building are up for sale. Giant question mark posters have appeared on the front canopy, adding to the intrigue about its future. It opened as the **Kings Theatre** in November 1904 with 2,400 seats on three levels. Films began to be screened in 1909. It was renamed **Opera House** in 1916 and was the first provincial cinema in Scotland to install sound. It was redesigned and reopened as the **Regal** in 1937 with 2,016 seats and renamed **ABC** in 1963. It was tripled in 1977 and had various name changed before finally closing as an **Odeon** in December 2000, when a new ten-screen **Odeon** opened in nearby Dunfermline. {23081}

Fife Free Press – 30 July; 13 August; photo taken September 2006

LEEDS (West Yorks)



The sixteen-screen **Showcase** at Birstall will be one of the first in the UK to have new luxury reclining seats in every screen. The refurbishment is expected to be completed by September. It will be renamed **Cinema de Lux**.

Yorkshire Evening Post – 2 July; photo taken September 2003

A grade II listed 1899 former engine house at Holbeck is to be converted into a restaurant and micro-brewery with an art-house cinema upstairs. Discussions with cinema operators are taking place and planning permission is expected to be applied for soon.

Express & Star (Wolverhampton) – 11 July; *Construction Index* – 13 July

LICHFIELD (Staffs)

A six-screen cinema is included in plans for the revamp of the Friarsgate shopping centre. Designs have been put on public display and feedback was invited; they are also available at:

[visitfriarsgate.co.uk]

Express & Star – 14, 20 July; sent in by Ivan Harris

LIVERPOOL (Central)

Campaigners who have fought to save the **Futurist** have backed new regeneration proposals for Lime Street, despite the plans including demolition of the cinema. Activists say they now accept that the building, including its façade, cannot be saved due to the site's shocking state of repair. The new designs have been influenced by the **Futurist**; it may be possible to project an image of the façade onto the new building. The former **Forum/ABC** across the road is protected by its grade II listing and now has a £9m regeneration budget.

Liverpool Echo – 27, 30 June, 5 July, 12 August

LIVERPOOL (Speke)

Permission has been granted for a new eleven-screen **Cineworld** as part of a major overhaul of New Mersey Shopping Park.

Liverpool Echo – 29 July; *Insider Media* – 11 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth

LLANDRINDOD WELLS (Powys)



The County Council has decided to sell the **Grand Pavilion** and the grounds that surround it. It was built in 1912 at a cost of £4,750 as a concert hall, dance hall and theatre. Originally there was a balcony all the way around the building, which was used by Lord Baden-Powell when he gave a speech to a Scout Jamboree in April 1933. It was later used as a 900-seat cinema, run by Paramount Picture Theatres and in more recent years by Whale Cinemas. The building was refurbished in 1994 by the Town Council

Sent in by Bob Paddock; photo taken April 2010

LONDON (Barnet)



The five-screen former **Odeon** reopened as the **Everyman** on 31 July. The old carpet in the foyer has been removed and replaced with colourful rugs. The screens at the moment have been left untouched. The cinema will close again in the winter for further refurbishment. The design plans – including the number of screens – are not yet finalised and will depend on what original features are uncovered. {14114} *photo [as Odeon] taken September 2006*

Hendon & Finchley Times – 6 August; sent in by Trevor Owen

LONDON (Chelsea)

New plans have been revealed by Cadogan Estates to redevelop the 713-seat **Curzon** (ex **Chelsea Cinema** / **Odeon**) in Kings Road. The site will be remodelled, retaining the façade, with a new three-screen **Curzon** in the basement with a main auditorium of 400 seats, similar in size to the current one. There will be two smaller screens bringing the total to about 600 seats. The remainder of the development would be flats and shops. If approved, work could start in 2017 and be complete by 2020. {14894}

Kensington & Chelsea News – 13 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth

LONDON (Elephant & Castle)

Plans for redevelopment of the area do not include the **ABC/Coronet** cinema. The site is to be used as a loading bay for shops with a small cinema elsewhere in the scheme.

South London Press – 17 July; sent in by Keith Bye

LONDON (Eltham)

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is due to submit a planning application for a six-screen cinema on the former Poundland site. An operator has been appointed but their identity has not been revealed.

News Shopper (Greenwich & Charlton) – 24 June; Greenwich Time – 7 July

LONDON (Rayners Lane)



The former **Grosvenor**, now the Zoroastrian Centre, featured with brief exterior and interior scenes in an episode of the BBC's *New Tricks* in late August. It looks as if the BBC persuaded the Church to cover up their signage! {11167}

Sent in by Edwin Robinson & Mike Wood; photo taken February 2007

LONDON (Hoxton)

The grade II listed **Hoxton Hall** [R] has had a £2m Lottery funded facelift. A Victorian Music Hall, it opened in 1863. The narrow auditorium has an iron-railed two-tier gallery on three sides, supported on cast iron columns. For many years it was used as a Quaker Meeting House.

[www.hoxtonhall.co.uk]

Time Out – 4-11 August; sent in by R David Simpson

LONDON (Kensington)

The six-screen **Odeon** was due to close on 11 September when the lease expires. It will be demolished and replaced with flats and a seven-screen 1,036-seat **Picture House** cinema in the basement. The plans include demolition of the stone towers on either side but retention of the main façade. Many original interior features have been lost. The scheme is a revised version of one that was rejected in January. If it is refused again, the developers may turn to an alternative plan that gained approval in 2008 and was renewed in 2012. Campaigners have called upon London Mayor Boris Johnson to help save the cinema. See p6 last Bulletin. {13801}

London Weekly News – 2 July; Evening Standard – 17, 22, 23 July; Private Eye – 21 August; sent in by Keith Bye, Carl Chesworth, Mike Collins, R David Simpson, Martin Tapsell & Simon Walker

LONDON (South Ruislip)

Sainsbury's has lost a bid to thwart a project that includes a rival Asda store. The development on the former Arla site includes an eleven-screen **Cineworld**. See p18 Bulletin 49/2.

Uxbridge & West Drayton Gazette – 29 July; sent in by John Benzing

LONDON (Waterloo)

Plans have been approved for a £1.3bn redevelopment of the 1957 **Shell Centre** involving demolition of most of the current building. It contained a basement theatre, fully equipped with a fly tower and a stage as big as many West End theatres, built two floors underground. The top of the fly tower was at street level and the get-in was effected via the flies with the scenery lowered to stage level. The public entrance was via a lift down to the recreation area, which included an Olympic-size pool, gymnasium, cinema, bars and the theatre. It was designed by Cecil Beaton with a seaside theme: white textured walls represented cliffs, the carpet was the colour of sand with integrated pebbles and the ceiling was sky blue. The foyer contained a huge Osbert Lancaster mural depicting London streets. The theatre was chiefly used for conferences and for productions by the Lensbury Theatre Group, an amateur company consisting mainly of Shell employees. The theatre never held a public performance licence and was dismantled in 2002. The CTA visited before closure. [Information supplied by Sally McGrath from *Old Theatres* 2009.]

South London Press – 17 July; sent in by Keith Bye

LONDON (West End)

The **Prince Charles** installed 70mm projection specially to show a 70mm print of *2001: A Space Odyssey* on 19 September. More 70mm films are being programmed. The cinema's website [www.princecharlescinema.com] has more details, a short video and links to other 70mm projection videos.

Sent in by Carl Chesworth

MACCLESFIELD (Cheshire)

News plans for a redevelopment, incorporating a cinema, have been revealed following the abandonment of the controversial Silk Street Plan. Proposals are to sell off one of two town centre car parks.

Macclesfield Express – 24 June

MANCHESTER (Central)

Architects will soon be appointed for the new £110m **Factory Theatre** to be built on the site of the former Granada TV Studios. Work is due to start in 2017 with the opening scheduled for July 2019.

Manchester Evening News – 23 July; Cheshire Independent – date unknown; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Nick Taylor



MARGATE (Kent)



The former Plaza cinema has a new life as an Armáda Stásy, which is Czech for Salvation Army. It has been repainted outside.

Sent in & photo by Martin Tapsell

MONTROSE (Angus)

A peppercorn rent of £1 a year has been agreed for the former swimming pool. There are plans to demolish it and build a four-screen cinema on the site. The £4.2m cost will require major fundraising.

Evening Telegraph (Dundee) – 11 June; Evening Express (Aberdeen) – 29 July

NEWMARKET (Suffolk)

The Council has agreed not to object to revised plans to turn the former **Doric** into flats and offices. Plans for ten flats on the car park at the rear have been dropped, reducing the total number from 46 to 36. The building was last used as a nightclub; there had been hopes that it could be converted back into a cinema. See p22 last Bulletin. {24935}

Newmarket News – 5 August; Newmarket Journal – 6 August

NORTHAMPTON



Planning permission is being sought to open a second screen at the **Errol Flynn Filmhouse**, part of the **Royal and Derngate Centre**. The cinema only opened in June 2013 with 88 seats and has welcomed nearly 85,000 people over two years. The new building will be of a similar design and style and is expected to cost around £650,000. Errol Flynn spent 18 months as an actor at the **Theatre Royal** during 1934 & 1935 before moving to Hollywood. {41652}

Northampton Herald & Post – 30 July; photo taken July 2013 by David Simpson

NORTHWICH (Cheshire)

The grade II listed **Plaza** held a display of postcards inspired by the Pedal Power Festival. Films ceased at the 1928 building in the 1960s and bingo took over. That closed in 2011 and the building has been empty since, although there are moves to reopen it. {22410}

Northwich, Winsford & Middlewich Guardian – 1 July

NORWICH

A heritage walking trail has been created, taking in twelve former cinema buildings. *The City's Cinemas* booklet is available from **Cinema City**, the Mustard Shop, Jarrolds and the Norwich Castle Museum shop for £2.95. It is also available on-line for £3.50 at [cinemaplus.org.uk/cinema-maps], which also has details of £2 booklet for a similar trail in Great Yarmouth.

Eastern Daily Press – 13 July; sent in by R David Simpson

NOTTINGHAM

New leather recliner seats have been installed in all twelve screens at the **Showcase**. This follows the installation of the XPlus auditorium and lobby refurbishment last year. Prices have not increased.

Nottingham Post – 17 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth



The building that houses the grade II* listed former **Elite** is up for sale for offers "in excess of £4¼m". The cinema opened in 1921 and screened the first talkie in Nottingham in 1929. Films ceased in March 1977 and bingo took over, lasting until the early 1990s. It was last used as a nightclub with some retail and office use. {21746}

Nottingham Post – 18 August; photo taken July 2004

OMAGH (Tyrone, Northern Ireland)

Proposals to open a bowling alley and an eight-screen **Omniplex** cinema on the Kelvin Road are still progressing through the planning process.

Ulster Herald – 6 August

OSWESTRY (Shropshire)

Work is unlikely to resume soon on a retail and leisure development on the former livestock market. Planning conditions specified that the infrastructure and a cinema must be completed before the supermarket is opened. Morrisons raised concerns over "uncertainties" with proposed operator **Cineworld** in May and the project has stalled.

Shropshire Star – 2 July

The former **Regal** has reopened as a Factory Shop. The building has been heavily altered since its cinema days; the interior was gutted and two levels created inside in 2004. {28606}

Shropshire Star – 18 July

OXFORD

The **Ultimate Picture Palace** has installed a new screen as the old one was beginning to look worn. New speakers have also been fitted. This is the latest phase of a £100,000 refurbishment.

Oxford Mail – 18 June

Work has begun on the new Westgate Centre, which will incorporate a five-screen **Curzon** cinema. It is due to open in autumn 2017.

Oxford Mail – 2 July

PERTH

A multiplex cinema is included in plans for a retail and leisure development for the Mill Quarter. No time scale was given.

Perthshire Advertiser – 30 June

PLYMOUTH



The grade II* listed **Palace Theatre** has been taken over by a youth training charity which aims to buy the building in the next two years and restore it. When it opened in 1898, the **Palace Theatre** had a 1,610-seat capacity. However, it has not been used as a theatre since 1983, and has been in total disuse since 2006. {33730}

BBC News website – 16, 22 May; sent in by Richard Jones; photo June 2008

A multiplex cinema is included in plans for a development at Derri-ford Fortside. There are also plans for a **Cineworld** multiplex as part of the Bretonside development. The chairman of Plymouth Argyle Football Club says that a cinema [possibly **Odeon**] has been dropped from plans for a new grandstand at the ground as advisors have said that the City could not support three multiplexes.

The Herald (Plymouth) – 2, 8 July

POOLE (Dorset)



The **Lighthouse Theatre** has begun a £5.3m refurbishment programme. Initial works include improving the sound insulation of the 105-seat cinema and a new lobby between the cinema and the 150-seat studio theatre. The complete refurbishment, including improvements to the main 669-seat theatre and 1,500-seat concert hall is due to be completed by October 2016. It is the largest centre for arts in England outside London and is home to the famous Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. It opened in 1971 and was last refurbished in 2002. {25244}

Poole Advertiser – 6 August; photo taken May 2006

PRESTAYN (Denbigh / Sir Dinbych)

The two-screen **Scala** reopened on 3 July, having been taken over by Aurora Leisure, who operate the cinema in Thurso (Scotland). New Sony 4k projection equipment has been installed as well as other improvements. See p26 Bulletin 48/2. {23237}

Caithness Courier – 1 July; Daily Post (Wales) – 1, 2 July

READING

The **Showcase** at Winnersh is to install reclining leather seats in all fourteen screens. A refurbished lobby and lounge bar as well as the addition of an XPlus auditorium will also form part of a £10m investment in the UK this year. The venue [sometimes listed as in Woking-ham] will be rebranded **Showcase de Lux**.

Get Reading – 25 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

RYE (East Sussex)

The new **Kino** has received an award at the Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies' inaugural Conservation and Design Awards ceremony. It opened in January 2015. See p13 Bulletin 49/2. {47891}

Battle Observer – 3 July

RYHOPE (Sunderland)



The former **Grand Electric Cinema** is to be dismantled brick by brick and moved to Beamish Open-Air Museum. The cinema opened in 1912 and films ceased in the 1960s. Bingo took over and the building was later used as a garage and auto parts store. Up to 600 seats for use in the cinema's new home have been donated from the former **Palladium** in Durham. {49699}

The Journal (Newcastle), Sunderland Echo – 28 July; Chester-Le-Street Advertiser, Consett & Stanley Advertiser – 30 July; sent in by Frank Manders & Mike Wood; photo taken September 2006

SANDOWN (Isle of Wight)

The former **Rivoli** looks more likely to be demolished and replaced by housing unless campaigners wishing to save the building can raise the necessary cash. They have raised £140,000 but the owners say the building is worth £250,000 to £300,000. The building was converted to a 700-seat cinema in 1921 but became bingo from 1965 until 1993. It was latterly used as a theatrical costume warehouse. {40200}

Isle of Wight County Press – 7 August

SCARBOROUGH (North Yorks)



As trailed on p23 of the last Bulletin, a drive-in cinema called **Moonlight** with a capacity of 200 cars was due to open in a field just off the B1261 at Crossgates. It started off by advertising *Grease* but their website is now listing obscure movies. At the field itself there is no advertising for any film screenings, no sign of the screen being created [which it was 3 weeks ago with the steel frame – but I never saw the actual screen material being placed on it]. The yellow box was supposed to be for the 4k digital projector. On their website it was advertising daily screenings – but it just wasn't happening – I live two minutes from it.

I've just been down to the field site at 9:45 pm to see if the Simon Pegg film *Absolutely Legal* which was due to be screened at 9:30 pm was actually being shown. No it wasn't! Everything was dark – no-one in the field at all. Two cars drove close to the gates but turned around and drove on. I actually got out of the car and walked over to the gate – so I'm not hallucinating! I'm really puzzled by the whole

thing. If they've gone bust because no-one turned up at the previous attempts, then they should not be advertising on the website – obviously. They were advertising a charge of £20 per car.

Scarborough News – 25, 26 June; sent in & photo by Terry Ladlow

Revised plans have been submitted for a cinema at North Bay. The move comes after the Council rejected the idea of a cinema on the North Street car park and decided not to put the site out to tender. This new proposal is identical to the one that was rejected last April; it has gone out for public consultation.

Scarborough News – 18 June, 2, 16 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

SHEFFIELD



A two-day film festival at the **Abbeydale** has been hailed as a great success. The green seats from when it closed in 1975 had been placed into storage and were put into the stalls. A 30ft screen was constructed on the stage and two 35mm projectors were supplied by the Projected Picture Trust. Health and Safety regulations precluded use of the balcony but a platform was erected so visitors could view it. The film *Call of the Road* that opened the cinema in December 1920 was screened with a live piano accompaniment. {22681}

Star (Sheffield) – 17 July; Sheffield Telegraph – 16, 23 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Stuart Smith; photo taken April 2010

SKELMERSDALE (Lancs)

Reel Cinemas has agreed a 15-year deal with developers to run a multiplex in the town centre redevelopment. There was a twin-screen cinema {40620} under the bus station between 1973 and 1982, which then became bingo. It is believed the building is still there.

Liverpool Echo – 21 June

SOUTHAMPTON

An application for a 24-hour licence has been submitted for the ten-screen **Showcase de Lux** that will be part of the WestQuay complex. A virtual fly-through is available at [youtu.be/PwZ4sq7u_IY].

Southern Daily Echo – 13, 27 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Ian Patterson

The grade II listed **Mayflower Theatre** (ex **Empire/Gaumont**) has had its highest annual admissions ever in its 28-year history. Over 600,000 visitors came through the doors, representing a capacity of 83%, compared to an average regional theatre capacity of 59%. The Balcony Bar has had a total refurbishment and been renamed the Spotlights Bar.

Southampton Daily Echo – 3, 7 August; sent in by Ian Patterson

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA (Essex)

A fire devastated the **New Empire** on 26 July. The roof collapsed and the first floor auditorium has been largely destroyed. Fire investigators believe that the blaze was started deliberately. The owner, who has put the building up for sale, was out of the country on holiday at the time – see p23 last Bulletin. {14608}

Southend Echo – 27, 28 July; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Ken Roe

Cineworld has pulled out of a £50m project for a multiplex on the Seaway car park apparently because the cinema operator wanted a 14m high building, 5m higher than that proposed, to accommodate its ten screens. The developer is said to be in discussion with other cinema operators. The town is currently served by an eight screen **Odeon**.

Southend Standard – 31 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth, Margaret Burgoine & David Simpson

STOCKPORT

Work on the Redrock project, which includes a ten-screen **Light** cinema, is due to start in October and is expected to be finished in 2017.

Stockport Express – 15 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

STONEHAVEN (Aberdeen)

The Community Cinema in the Mearns may have to close because of poor attendances. Showings in September and October have been cancelled.

Evening Express (Aberdeen) – 25 July; Dundee Courier – 1 August

STOURBRIDGE (Dudley)

As reported on p23 of the last Bulletin, the former **Savoy/ABC** is up for sale. It is understood groups wanting to reopen it as a cinema have shown an interest in the building. However, the building has none of its original features and floors have been inserted, meaning it is more likely to be converted into housing.

Stourbridge Chronicle – 30 July; sent in by Ivan Harris

A 12D cinema [!] has opened in a trampoline park off Mill Race Lane. It offers up to 12 multi-sensory effects including action motion seats. Ten short films are already available and new titles are added every month.

Stourbridge Chronicle – 13 August

ST ALBANS (Herts)

The sound system at the newly-opened **Odyssey** (ex **Odeon**) has concerned some neighbours. Despite this, they have largely given support to the new cinema. A spokesman said there were “teething problems” and has attempted to sort out the issue, trying to revamp the sound insulation. A neighbour said that during a screening of *Mad Max* “it was like Concorde taking off in the garden.”

Herts Advertiser – 20 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON (Warks)

Everyman has signed up to operate the proposed four-screen cinema in the Bell Yard development and planning permission has been applied for. Stratford already has a twin-screen **Picture House** cinema. Calls to boycott the new cinema have been made on social media.

Stratford-upon-Avon Herald – 18, 25 June, 2, 17 July; Coventry Telegraph – 30 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

SWANSEA/ABERTAWE



The building that formerly housed the **Odeon** and Top Rank Suite in the Kingsway has been bought by Swansea City Council and is to be demolished to make way for an office block to spearhead the regeneration of a street that has become very run down with numerous boarded-up premises. The **Odeon** was a brand new 1,400-seat stadium cinema that opened on 17 May 1967, was tripled in 1982 and finally closed on 14 December 1997 when Rank did not renew the lease on the building. It was eventually converted into a Jumpin Jaks nightclub and more recently Oceania, a complex of nightclubs and bars, which never really took off as the bar and club quarter in the City became increasingly orientated to Wind Street. Demolition is scheduled to start in late October; the site could become home to Swansea Council and library. Note: The current twelve-screen **Odeon** in Parc Tawe is the former **UCI** multiplex, which was taken over by **Odeon**. {17958} photo taken August 2007

BBC News website – 31 July; sent in by Richard Jones & John Skinner

SWANSEA/ABERTAWE



The grade II listed **Albert Hall** has been sold for £100,000 to a London-based buyer. The future of the building is not known. The CTA visited in 1992 when bingo was in full swing; that closed in March 2007 and the building has been empty since.

South Wales Evening Post – 4 August; photo taken August 2007

TROWBRIDGE (Wilts)

A second cinema for the town appears less likely as the site has been offered on the market with bids closing on 6 July. The County Council has urged the buyer to consider incorporating housing into any development. **Cineworld** had once been interested in the site but a seven-screen **Odeon** opened in the town last year.

Wiltshire Times – 26 June

TUNBRIDGE WELLS (Kent)

Tunbridge Wells Liberal Democrats have vowed not to give up on their attempt to buy the site of the former **ABC** [etc] after their initial bid was turned down. The party wants to use the site for a community asset.

Times of Tunbridge Wells – 17 June

WALLINGFORD (Oxon)



There have been calls to demolish the former **Regal** as part of plans to redevelop the area. It is currently used as a sports centre.

Oxford Times – 9 July; photo taken April 2009

A digital projector was installed in the 175-seat **Corn Exchange** two years ago but the 35mm projector was retained for emergencies. Now that has been retired, with a showing of *The Wizard of Oz*, *Jailhouse Rock* and *High Society*, interspersed with cartoons, old trailers and a newsreel. The event on 25 July was free. {42974}

Oxford Mail – 11 July

WELLINGTON (Shropshire)

Campaigners wanting to turn the former **Clifton** into a multi-use venue have said they are “disappointed” that the Council has not done enough to back the project. ‘Sold’ signs have appeared on the building and it is feared it might now be too late to save it. {37745}

Shropshire Star – 2, 4, 11, 22, 28 July

WESTHOUGHTON (Lancs)

Planning permission is being sought for 15 homes on the site of the former **Empire**. The cinema closed in the early 1960s and had a variety of uses since, including the Gaiety Club. It was demolished sometime between 2011 and May 2015.

Bolton Journal – 13 August

WHITEHAVEN (Cumbria)

Plans (reported on p23 of Bulletin 49/2) for a cinema and restaurant complex are said to be progressing well. The team is now looking at existing buildings to convert, having scrapped its plans for a new building after bidding unsuccessfully on land.

Whitehaven News, News & Star (Cumbria) – 11 June

The **Gaiety** is to reopen permanently this autumn; it closed in 2003. It will have a new state-of-the-art picture and sound system and a seating upgrade. It opened temporarily in June for a film festival. The 264-seat cinema is in the former circle and bingo continues in the stalls. See p24 last Bulletin.

Whitehaven News – 27 August; sent in by Charles Morris

WHITELEY (Hants)

The new nine-screen **Cineworld** is scheduled to open in October.

The News (Portsmouth) – 13 August

WINCHESTER (Hants)

A board outside the **Everyman/Screen** says it is closed for a refurbishment until the end of September. The cinema was visited by the CTA in June – see p7.

Sent in by Ian Patterson

WOLVERHAMPTON

The Council is to scrap the £73,000 subsidy it pays to the **Light House Media Centre**. It has operated a two-screen cinema in the former Chubb Building since March 1987. {25862}

Express & Star (Wolverhampton) – 21 July; sent in by Ivan Harris

WOODBIDGE (Suffolk)



The **Riverside Theatre** celebrates its 100th birthday in September. It opened as the **Electric Theatre** in 1915 with *Bulldog Drummond*; it had 650 seats. In the late 1950s a stage was installed in the front stalls area, which reduced the capacity to 300. It was still listed as open as a cinema in 1980. It had a total refit in 1985 costing £250,000. It is now a thriving 288-seat cinema/theatre. Digital projection has been installed. {22411}

EADT (Suffolk) – 1 August; *Suffolk Magazine* – 3 August;

sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken February 2000 by David Simpson

WORTHING (West Sussex)

Worthing Theatres, which runs the **Connaught Theatre**, the **Pavilion Theatre** and the **Assembly Hall** sold 58,000 more tickets than the previous year, raising £1.78m. It also saw its highest number of sell-outs at 154. The theatres were only £184,000 over budget in the 2014/15 financial year, compared with the previous year's £484,000 overspend.

The Argus (Brighton) – 14 July; *Worthing Herald* – 16 July;

sent in by Barry Quinton

There is speculation that the former Police Station in Union Place could become a retail outlet with a cinema above.

Worthing Herald – 23 July



CINEMA BUSINESS

CINEWORLD

Cineworld, which has 107 UK sites including the **Picturehouse** brand, has reported total revenues up 11% in the UK and Ireland. Box Office returns rose 10½% and retail sales by 10.8% in the 26 weeks to 2 July. Pre-tax profits jumped to almost £47m and prices rose by 5.2%. **Cineworld** also has 1,927 screens across Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Israel. Box Office takings grew in almost every region, helping push total group revenue up 11.2%.

*Daily Telegraph, The Independent, Financial Times – 8 July;
Daily Express, Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, The Sun – 14 August;
sent in by Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton*

BAA-VELLOUS

Shaun the Sheep Movie was the highest grossing UK Independent film in the first half of 2015, taking £13.7m. Cinema attendance rose 10% to 83 million.

Daily Telegraph – 24 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BINGO PROFITS

Gala Coral revenues grew from £288m to £305m in the twelve weeks to 4 July, while gross profits grew by £8.1m to £216.4m. Revenue for the year to date was £988m, a rise of almost 50% on the previous year.

Rank Group, owners of Mecca Bingo, said pre-tax profits were up 19% to £74m while revenue had grown 3% to £700m.

[cityam.com] – 21 August; sent in by Keith Bye

ODEON HOPES

Losses at **Odeon/UCI** widened to £119.7m last year. Paid attendances fell 2% to 78.5m in 2014. In Spain, however, attendances rose 13.5% thanks to the success of a local film. Meanwhile in the UK, visitor numbers fell by 4.9%. Earnings before tax fell by 23% to £53m with turnover down 7% to £657m. First quarter results for 2015 show admissions improved by 12.2%. Odeon said the removal of card handling fees also helped to boost bookings.

[cityam.com] – 17 August; sent in by Keith Bye & Richard Norman

ODEON TRIVIA



The **Odeon** Lincoln at night in September 2003

The **Odeon** Lincoln has received more than £1.2m in evening parking fees from Lucy Tower Street car park, part of an agreement when it moved to its Brayford Wharf site in 2001.

The **Odeon** Manchester not only sold more alcohol than any other **Odeon** in the UK but also managed to sell the second highest number of tickets during the opening weekend of *Fifty Shades of Grey*.

Celluloid Junkie – 20 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

PINEWOOD REELS

Pinewood Studios says it is forced to turn away potential blockbusters because of lack of space. It is building four new stages that will increase its capacity by 25%. Annual revenues rose from £65m to £75m while profits soared 40% to £5m. The amount the company received in Film Tax relief was £4m, around £1m more than last year.

STREAMING DEAL

US Cinema Chain **AMC** and Canadian company **Cineplex** have struck a deal to allow Paramount Studios to offer a couple of trial titles to home viewers 17 days after they appear in theatres. Paramount is planning to approach other cinema chains to see if they will take the two films on similar terms. In return, exhibitors will get a cut of the rental income for 90 days. Rival Netflix is a proponent of simultaneous releasing.

The Guardian – 9 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

CHINA CINEMA GROWTH

The first six months of 2015 saw an addition of 600 new cinemas with 2,449 screens, putting the total in China to 26,244. This is an average daily growth rate of 13½ screens! However the rate is slowing down; the year-on-year screen growth fell by 6.4%, having increased by 28.7% in the previous period. Starting with a high of 126 cinemas and 567 screens in January 2015, this figure fell every month to just 54 cinemas and 295 screens in July. The average number of screens per new cinema also dropped.

Celluloid Junkie – 3 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth

NIGERIA

IMAX has signed a deal with Filmhouse Cinemas for an **IMAX** cinema to be located in a new construction project in Lagos. This is the first ever **IMAX** agreement in Nigeria and West Africa, following deals in Angola and South Africa.

Digital Cinema Technology – 24 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

ODEON LAUNCHES INNOVATION LAB

Odeon and UCI Cinemas group will open its HQ once a month to nurture entrepreneurs to create products to improve the experience of cinema-goers. Start-ups will be able to collaborate with its commercial and IT teams and the best ideas will be tested in UK cinemas. If the London pilot is successful, the group will launch another innovation lab in Barcelona.

[startups.co.uk] – 24 June; sent in by Carl Chesworth

70MM RESURRECTED

Quentin Tarantino has shot his latest film *The Hateful Eight* in 65mm and is to retrofit roughly 80-100 US theatres with 70mm equipment to show it. It is due for release on 25 December in 70mm and 35mm only, so those theatres still equipped to show film will have a head start; the digital release is scheduled for two weeks later. It is also rumoured that the next *Star Wars* film will have a 70mm release. Some UK cinemas are also re-installing 70mm and having occasional 70mm films – see p16.

[www.in70mm.com] – 23 July; sent in by Carl Chesworth

CARTOON CORNER



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

LETTERS

GHOST SIGNS



In 1979 I took the above picture of the side wall of the **Apollo** Cinema in Wimbledon when advert hoardings were removed. The sign has since been covered with more hoardings but part of the lettering is still visible. I do not know much about the **Apollo**. I believe that it was a short-lived silent house. In 1980 I went round the inside of the building. There was nothing to show that it had once been a cinema.

Kevin Wheelan

CUSTARD CREAM

This ghost sign [R] is in St John's Hill, Clapham Junction, London, not far from the former **Granada**. The Peterkin Mill was owned by J Arthur Rank and when it failed he went into the film business.

Sunday People – 5 April; [www.ghostsigns.co.uk]; sent in by Carl Chesworth



OLDEST CINEMA

Further to the information in the last Bulletin, the notion that the **Alexandra** Blackburn, was the world's first purpose-built cinema is one that has been promoted heavily in Blackburn. During my time there some forty years ago, there was a regular correspondent to the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph* who continually maintained this – and that it opened in 1906 – to the extent that it has become almost holy writ and I note the newspaper is still perpetuating the myth. David Atwell, seeking information from the Blackburn Library in the 1970s, was nevertheless informed thus:-

“Definite evidence is difficult to find. Contrary to popular belief, the cinema did not open in 1906. Application for a licence was made in November 1908 and planning permission was sought from the Town Council in December 1908. Work probably began in 1909 and the owners were paying rates in that year. There exists a newspaper cutting suggesting that the cinema was opened on Easter Monday 1909 and a second cutting suggests Easter Tuesday 1909. Extensive checks of newspapers for the Easter period 1909 and 1910 do not confirm this and the first advertisement giving details of the cinema's programmes did not appear in the *Blackburn Weekly Telegraph* until 1913. Although we are unable to provide the exact date of opening it seems probable that the Alexandra Hall, a purpose-built cinema, was in operation sometime during the year 1909.”

It seems fairly definite that the cinema closed for renovation in 1954 and it apparently continued on films until 1962, when it became a bingo hall operated by the Hutchinson Leisure Group. In the 1970s it was reconverted to a cinema for a while, showing Asian films. Its original nickname '**Penks**' came from the name of its first proprietors, the Pendleton brothers.

Charles Morris

I was born in Blackburn in 1943 about a mile away from the **Alexandra** Cinema, locally known as '**Penk's**', I presume named after the then owner. A very small cinema, I used to visit it in the late 50s and early 60s. Today it would probably be termed as *bijou*! It was on Dock Street and backed onto the Leeds and Liverpool canal at Eanam Wharf. A vertical red neon sign spelt out its name over the corner entrance. The box office and foyer were very small and a door led into the stalls area by the screen. Opposite was a staircase rising from the stalls to a small balcony. Decoration was almost absent. If the screen masking needed altering between films, the projectionist would walk down from the box in the rear balcony into the stalls and disappear backstage to do the job manually. After it closed, it eventually became a carpet warehouse/shop. I was always told it was the first purpose-built cinema in the country but now there is some dispute if that was so. It was certainly one of the first if not the first. I understand it was 'modernised' in the early 1950s and that is the interior I remember. Over Eanam, on the main Accrington to Blackburn road, was The **Victoria** Cinema locally known as **Charnley's**, also believed to be named after the once owner. Again this backed onto the canal. It was larger than the **Alexandra** and had been converted from a brewery. Sad to say, it subsided and collapsed during one night as the original wells from the brewery days caved in. I walked past it next day. A sorry sight. Luckily it had closed for the night and there were no injuries. There were many cinemas in the town, now either demolished or turned into other uses. As a youth in the early days of cinema, my grandfather had a part-time job taking advertising slides from cinema to cinema to be projected on the screen. After they had been used in one cinema, he had to quickly make his way to another one so that they could project them! Both '**Penk's**' and **Charnley's** are now long gone.

David Aspinall, Chief reporter for *Old Theatres* magazine.

BLUEBELL AND GREAT YARMOUTH

Many thanks for the last Bulletin – a great read, as usual. Allen Eyles' picture quiz on p30 – I think is the advert at Horsted Keynes Station on the Bluebell Railway; well worth a visit.



Have just got back from a week's holiday in Great Yarmouth. I noticed the former **Regent** (last used for Mecca Bingo) is still open as Stars nightclub; it opens at 10:00pm. It still has the Mecca carpets in the foyer. The **Empire** on the front facing the beach is still To Let and has been so for a long time

Malcolm Gambles

Editor's Note: Malcolm is absolutely right. Allen sent in the above picture to clear up the mystery.

WINCHESTER THANKS

Many thanks to everyone for the excellent Winchester wanderings in June, only slightly spoiled by the strange woman in Romsey – no doubt she had her problems. One theatre that was not mentioned in the booklet or on the tour was the **Chesil Theatre** in Chesil Street, Winchester – just round the corner from where we had our meal. This is in the former St Peters church. Dating from the 12th Century, the former church was taken over by the Winchester Dramatic Society in 1966. The Society (one of the oldest amateur societies in the country dating from the 19th Century) was homeless at the time and made the former church their permanent home. Recently they have been fundraising to extend their premises and have acquired two old houses next door.



The Chesil Theatre Winchester in March 2009

The mention of Miles Byrne and partner running the **Royal** in Winchester reminds me of other cinemas he operated. These included the **Tivoli** at Wareham (now in use as a theatre) and the **Continental** in Brighton. The **Tivoli** had a banner outside saying “Cinema at its Best”. After closure, another banner was put outside saying “Permanently Closed”. There appears to be conflict between the two statements!

Ian Patterson

PAVEMENT OF FAME



Further to my letter on p23 of Bulletin 45/5 regarding the *Pavement of Fame* in Slough. It was originally at the **Granada** Slough, which I [RDS] managed from 1974 to 1987. It was then removed and put into storage. However, a slab bearing the scrawl of John Wayne is missing. I came across a photo of John Wayne adding his handprints in a 1950s *Boys & Girls' Club* annual. The slab, which was smaller than the others, was never positioned outside the cinema as far as I'm aware – it possibly ended up in a manager's back garden! I checked the slabs in 2011 and only four are clearly legible. I think the Bette Davis slab has just worn away. I'm pleased to say that after several years of cajoling, the Council is to put four slabs on display at **The Curve**, the new library/museum/auditorium due to open in December. I think they would be better installing the slabs on an inside wall, instead of in a garden. There is a video of Will Hay visiting the **Granada** to put his hand prints in the pavement on YouTube at [youtu.be/Abb4CqpUqCg].

Slough Express – 14 August; sent in by Ben Doman & R David Simpson

SMELL SOMETHING?

The **Everyman** Islington (formerly the **Screen on the Green**) hosted an unusual screening on 24 & 25 June. Audience members watching the space drama *Gravity* and superhero movie *X Men : Days of Future Past* were subjected to a variety of aromas at key moments, given vapours to inhale through e-cigarettes and told to take food and drink when prompted, in order to heighten their reactions to events on the screen. Oxford University academic Charles Spence, who curated the pop-up event, claimed being able to smell and taste

movies is the future of the cinema and said the Disney Corporation is already exploring the potential of his research.

The basics of the various odour technologies have actually existed since the early 1900s – well before the introduction of sound – but have only ever been seen as jokes or oddities. Interestingly Disney explored the idea of including scents in his 1940 production *Fantasia* but eventually abandoned the project on the grounds of cost. However in 1960 'Smell-O-Vision' a system created by Hans Laube made its only appearance in *Scent of Mystery*, a mystery-comedy produced by Mike Todd Jr (son of the legendary Mike Todd). It was a flop, shown only in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago before being hastily converted to three-strip Cinerama and re-titled *Holiday in Spain*. It was later included in *Time* magazine's 'Top 100 Worst Ideas of the Century'. In London it ran at the **Coliseum Cinerama** between February and April 1966. The black comedy *Polyester* released in 1981 in 'Odorama' – “smelling is believing” – was American director John Waters' homage to Smell-O-Vision. The odours were produced by scratch 'n' sniff cards handed out to the audience. Starring Divine and Tab Hunter, *Polyester* has now achieved cult status and is included in the peripatetic film festival 'Scalarama'.

Ray Dolling

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

I feel I must counter the dismissive views of Edward Huggins, who wrote in the last Bulletin about his 'home cinema' room before asking why anyone would want to watch a film in a cinema auditorium with less than eighty seats. Mr Huggins seemed puzzled why cinemas would build such small screens and claimed that they were “only marginally better” than his 55" curved-screen television with Dolby 5.1 sound. Expensively assembled 'home cinemas' (you won't get a decent system for less than four figures) can certainly be impressive things but ultimately they are in your home. To appreciate a film properly you need to see it in a cinema, even if it is in a small auditorium. In fact, a smaller auditorium can be an intimate place and will often enhance a movie that isn't huge on scope or budget.

And that's why there is nothing better than a trip to a cinema, particularly if, like me, you are fortunate to have nine traditional high street cinemas within a seventy mile radius to choose from. From the past thirty films I've seen at these cinemas in the last couple of months, several have been shown in screens that had a capacity of 68, 86 and 33 and on each occasion the experience was far superior to anything you could experience in your own home. The reason for this is simple. Not only were the auditoria brand new or recently refurbished to the highest standard but to watch the films I actually entered a dream palace built during the golden age of Hollywood. These sites have been entertaining generations of audiences for over eighty years. They might have had several transformations over the years but their grandeur still remains and, of course, they show the latest releases. No home cinema system can claim that.

It should also be remembered that those traditional high street cinemas that are still open are often independents and face fierce competition from modern multiscreen rivals run by huge corporations. A small capacity screen is simply a financial necessity, allowing that site more bargaining power when it comes to booking, offering a greater selection of product and thus encouraging patrons to return. Small capacity screens are also easier to hire out for private viewings, creating much needed extra revenue and, of course, make effective use of an often redundant space. The **Picturedrome** at Bognor (1885, Arthur Smith), my nearest traditional cinema, has recently opened a beautiful 33-seat screen in its landmark octagonal tower and suddenly I can watch films which previously I would have to journey another twenty or even forty miles to see. This naturally gives cinemas, which have been entertaining us for sometimes a hundred years, the opportunity to keep doing so. A home cinema system doesn't do that. I'm happy to confess that I get excited when a film I want to see is on in a large auditorium. I love watching any movie in the sumptuous 634-capacity screen ① at the **ABC** Bournemouth (1937, WRGlen) and am never happier than sitting in my usual seat at the **Picturedrome**'s 378-seat screen ②.

But auditorium size isn't everything. Both my wife and I prefer to watch a movie in the 33-seat screen ③ at Bognor than the 688-seat main screen of the **Odeon** Bournemouth (1929, William Trent). And for a feeling that you've returned to the art deco delights of the

1930s – combined with modern luxury – the cosy yet spacious 177-seat main screen at the **Plaza** Dorchester (1935, RA Thomas), which is situated in the former circle, takes some beating. Films, no matter their age, truly deserve to be seen on the big screen. My wife and I have just seen a Marx Brothers movie, Humphrey Bogart in *Casablanca*, Cary Grant and Katherine Hepburn in *The Philadelphia Story* and the iconic *Sound of Music* all on the big screen at the not-as-big-as-it-sounds 240-seat **Connaught Studio** (1916, Peter D Stonham) in Worthing. This is another auditorium that recalls the elegance of movie going before television raised its tiny screen and all the classic films shown were a thousand times more enjoyable being viewed on a cinema screen than had we watched them on a five foot screen in the corner of our lounge.

Visiting these cinemas now, I'm too young to remember them during their single screen heydays – but I'm more than grateful that they defy the soulless 'plexes and keep doing what they were originally built to do: to show films. A trip to the cinema has and always will be, a truly magical experience, no matter the capacity of the auditorium, so go support your nearest traditional cinema and enjoy a couple of hours of pure bliss.

Mike Whitcombe

BUS HITS CANOPY IN MANCHESTER



For the second time in 18 months the canopy at the **Dancehouse** (ex **Regal** twins / **Studios 1-5**) on Oxford Road has been clouted by a bus and is undergoing repairs again. In recent days, the **Dancehouse** signage on one side has been removed and it is enjoying a *Brigadoon* moment by displaying the original **1-2-3-4-5** readograph.

Carl Chesworth; photo taken on a previous happening in June 2006

ICE CREAM LADY SPOTTED IN WORCESTERSHIRE!

How right David A. Ellis is! (*Whatever happened to the Ice Cream Lady?*: July/August Bulletin) However, all is not lost! The Ice Cream Lady is alive and well and working at the **FeckenOdeon** in deepest rural Worcestershire. As well as ices in those illuminated trays we also have tabs, lovely lighting, red plush and appropriate music to keep you amused before curtain up (and we have a bar). Our staff are all uniformed and the usherettes know how to wield a torch. We do have fantastic digital pictures and well-adjusted multi-track sound – but we believe that films, no matter what the technology, deserve to be presented properly and that our audience deserves a proper “night out at the pictures”.

The difference between us and your local multiplex is of course that we're all volunteers. We can afford to dim the lights, fade the music, cue the tabs manually, serve you ices in your seat, wish you good-night at the door as you leave. It's a very different story in the commercial cinema where everything is necessarily cut to the bone – one could wish that the operators could see the wisdom of spending just a few more bob to make the experience less utilitarian – it is perfectly possible to play music, dim lights properly and smile at the punters even if the show is totally automated. Perhaps the answer is to search out your local community cinema or film society, where at least the people running the show care about films – and the movies on offer stand a chance of being a little more interesting than the mind-numbing “blockbusters” thundering away at your local chain cinema. Anyway, you might consider spending a weekend in Feckenham. We've a couple of nice places for dinner before the show, some

comfy guest houses for overnight stays and some lovely countryside to potter about in – and we'll prove to you that digital technology and proper presentation can go hand in hand to give audiences the experience some of us remember and everyone deserves. Check [www.feckenodeon.co.uk] for show dates and times.

Ian Bellion

HALIFAX AND HUDDERSFIELD

Just to inform you of recent happenings in the Halifax and Huddersfield area. The **Regal** (ABC) has reopened as the **Cuba Bar & Grill** [R], after being closed for the last 12 months since Chicago's nightclub pulled out. The new owners are now open most of the day, using the foyer areas for food and the boxed-off stalls area for evening meals and more up-market showbar entertainment. The main foyer has been put back to full-size, as the previous nightclubs had built a partition across it. The new owners seem very interested in its past life as a cinema and they even had an open day on Saturday 11 July,



showing people round all the circle areas in groups of no more than 10. This was lit up for the occasion – as CTA members know there were no lights upstairs when we visited in 2011. [See p5 Bulletin 45/6.] If you want to see more go on the Internet, enter “Cuba Bar & Grill Halifax Facebook” and you will see some photos of the WR Glen interior as it looks today. My photos are of the frontage with the film readograph boxed in behind the new signage.

The other cinema event on the same day was the official opening of the Projected Picture Trust's new base in Dean Clough Mills, Halifax. This was well attended and gave members and guests a chance to see the hard work that had been put in since the start of the year. (Some of the projectors were shown on the front of the last Bulletin.)

The **Palace Theatre** in Huddersfield, is now being converted into flats; there have been a number of holes put in the side walls for windows and as far as I know the 1930s frontage has to be retained. The former **Tudor/Essoldo/Cannon** building in Huddersfield was turned into nightspot. All traces of its cinematic past were taken away on its first conversion. The main auditorium and original foyer were turned into a nightclub, which has been closed for two years. The stage section, which housed screen ② and a new foyer, is still open as a bar known as the Picture House. The cinema closed in 1998.



The **Savoy Cinema** in the Marsh area of Huddersfield [above] has a new use, becoming a Playworld downstairs and a restaurant upstairs. The **Savoy** was built in 1919 and opened in 1920. It closed as a cinema in 1961. Hollywood actor James Mason was born and brought up not a mile from the **Savoy** in this area of Huddersfield. The **Princess Cinema** in the centre of Huddersfield has become a lap dancing and casino venture called Cleopatras. It closed as a cinema in 1982. It had various night clubs in the building but all seem to have failed.

Peter Berry [photos]

CINEMA RE-USE

The article *New Uses for Old Cinemas* (p29 last Bulletin), concerning the former Eastbourne **Eastern/Regal** Cinema being used as an undertaker's premises, reminded me that something similar occurred in a suburb of Leicester in 1981. The **Oadby** Cinema, in the suburb of that name, was opened as a single-screen cinema with 632 seats in 1937 with Will Hay's film *Good Morning Boys*. It was privately owned with two other cinemas in the chain; the **Magna** at Wigston Magna and the **Lawn** at Birstall. The **Oadby** closed in 1981 with Burt Reynolds in *Cannonball Run* and the premises were taken over by AJ Adkinson and Son as an extension to their funeral parlour, which was next door. I think the owner's name was Mr Cockroft and I remember that we had his daughter in the school where I taught. The school purchased a couple of tab tracks from the cinema for use in the school hall.

Ted Bottle



Editor's Note: Above is a photo I took of a painting of the cinema in its heyday, which was hanging in the foyer of the Funeral Directors when I visited in March 2006. The auditorium was out of bounds.

SALISBURY CINEMAS

Architectural writer Jonathan Meades pens a brief but evocative paragraph on Salisbury cinemas in the 1950s.

"The **Gaumont's** façade was lavishly timbered, super-Tudor and, of course, late Victorian. The hall within was lavishly timbered, super-Tudor and, astonishingly, echt Tudor, if heavily restored. A swash-buckling chandelier was suspended from a cats' cradle of beams above a long bare room with randomly disposed stained-glass windows and lustrous floor tiles. Neo-codpiece and halberd tapestries were hung on the walls of the theatre itself. Its unidentifiable omnipresent smell was pleasant. It never occurred to me that this cinema was an incongruous oddity. Salisbury's other two, the **Odeon** and the **Regal**, had conventionally off-the-peg moderne façades concealing hangars. They too had their own attractive smells. It is of course possible that some sort of ambient scent was liberally dispensed. Before the advent of indoor bathrooms, launderettes and washing machines humans were frequently malodorous. Crowds reeked. Ubiquitous cigarette smoke had a use, it covered up the stench of multiple secretions."

Jonathan Meades – *An encyclopaedia of myself*. p234
London: Fourth Estate, 2014, ISBN: 978-1857028492

Terry Hanstock

Editor's Note: Photo of **Gaumont** façade on p22 of last Bulletin

RAILWAY TIME-TABLE?

Seen at the Swanage Railway.

Philip Stevens

CINEMA PHOTOS FOR SALE

There are a great many cinema photos for sale on eBay. A search for "cinema photo" gives 1,838 listings; add a county to narrow the search.

Robert Bradshaw



CHURCHES THAT BECAME CINEMAS

It struck me whilst doing the churches to cinemas bit at Winchester, that you might like to consider a 'churches and chapels that became cinemas' call for info from members? To start it off:

Woodstock – **Empire** (Wesleyan chapel); London [Euston] – **Tolmer** (church); Ilfracombe – **Embassy** (Christ Church); Ilfracombe – **Picture Hall/Empire/New** (Central Rechabite Hall); Lynton – **BB Cinema** (chapel).

Right is a picture of the **New Cinema** Ilfracombe in 1937; the cinema was in the main hall upstairs but the downstairs was still used for religious purposes (left hand side).

Ian Meyrick

Editor's Note: I can add the following to the list, off the top of my head: Lancaster – **Dukes Cinema** (St Anne's Church); Carnoustie [Angus] – **Regal** (Erskine Church). I'm sure members know of many more...

EXHIBITION

A free exhibition of film posters and photographs plus the UK's largest model of a cinema made from LEGO bricks was held at The Strand Gallery in London. It finished on 28 August; I'm sorry we didn't find out earlier so you could have gone.

Evening Standard – 11 August; sent in by R David Simpson

LOOK AT LIFE

Network DVD has seven volumes of DVDs of Rank's *Look at Life* series available. Each set contains between 42 and 72 episodes over 3-5 discs. Prices are between £10.80 and £24, cheaper than many other sources. [www.networkdvd.co.uk]

Sent in by Carl Chesworth

CREDIT WHERE CREDIT'S DUE

Thanks to the members who gave such a clear answer in the last Bulletin to my question about who inserts the house-light cues for end credits. As it is indeed the cinema staff, maybe I can thank the two venues where the thoughtful timing of the lights recently added a lot to my enjoyment – the **Odeon** George Street, Oxford and the **Vue** Worcester. Perhaps I can now add a more recent example – the credits for *Love and Mercy* at the **Duke's at Komedia** in Brighton. I don't think I should go into details of why I found these three occasions so worthy of note – it must be pretty bad form to give away the very, very end of a film!

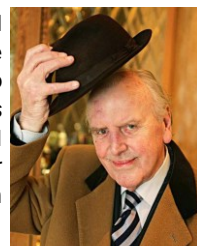
Jeremy Perkins

NECROLOGY

GEORGE COLE

George Cole has died after a short illness, aged 90. He was best known for playing lovable rogue Arthur Daley in *Minder* for 15 years from 1979 to 1994. He also starred in a number of *St Trinians* films as shady businessman Flash Harry. Old friend Sir Roger Moore said, "How sad to hear that George has gone to the great cutting room in the sky. A lovely actor. A gentleman."

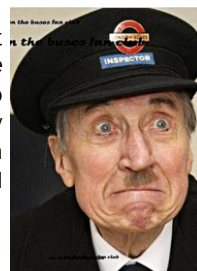
Daily Mail – 7 August; sent in by Barry Quinton



STEPHEN LEWIS

Stephen Lewis has died, aged 88. He is best known for playing Inspector Blakey in *On The Buses* from 1969 to 1973; the series also spawned three cinema films. He went on to play Smiler in *Last of the Summer Wine*, appearing in more than 130 episodes between 1988 and 2007.

Daily Mail, Daily Express – 14 August;
sent in by Barry Quinton



HOLIDAY SNAPS

FRANCE'S OLDEST CINEMA?



The **Castillet** opened in Perpignan in 1911 as a cinematograph and skating rink – the skating ball is still on the roof. The large art deco building now houses a seven-screen cinema, savings bank and brasserie. Taken in June 2015.

Anthony Wills

CHESTER GAUMONT



The canal-side location gives an idea of the extent of the buildings originally associated with the 1,997 seat **Gaumont Palace of 1931**, still on Mecca Bingo. Brick companies must have loved the super cinemas! Photograph August 2015 {24830}

Jeremy Perkins

KORDA THEATRE SHEPPERTON



I went to a cinema that has recently opened up, only on weekends, at the **Korda Theatre** at Shepperton Studios. I saw the first two *Mad Max* films – with one other patron, who turned out to be a Studio employee, so it was nice having a chat with him! See p29 Bulletin 49/3.

David Simpson

ARCHIVE

Archive Move

After nearly seven years residing at Roxwell Studios in Leyton, the Archive has had to move out. This is due to the unexpected news that the building is to be converted into residential accommodation. With only a few months' notice it has not been possible to find new premises to move into directly. Instead, as a temporary measure, we have taken storage units in East London to keep everything safe while we are looking for new premises to move into in the near future. I would like to thank the many volunteers who worked so hard to help pack up the Archive. This involved emptying 24 filing cabinets of records into 80 large crates for transportation. Once we arrived at our temporary home these volunteers worked tirelessly to empty all the contents of the crates back into the drawers again, all in one afternoon. Our movers, eight very professional and helpful removal men, worked very hard and managed to get all of the Archive into two large removal vans. We are now on the lookout for space of around 700 sqft or more, preferably in East or South East London but we are willing to consider any viable option, including other areas and sharing accommodation with another organisation or institution. If anyone has any suggestions please get in touch. I will keep you all up to date with progress. Due to the constraints of our storage units, it is not easy to receive visitors at present and it may not be possible to access all material to answer enquiries, which will also take longer to deal with. So unless it is urgent, please be patient and once we have moved into new accommodation we can resume our normal level of service.

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist



Our hard-working volunteers emptying the files back into the cabinets after the move.

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 [cta-archive@hotmail.co.uk].

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 [cta-archive@hotmail.co.uk].

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

The following have recently joined the CTA and we send them all a very warm welcome: Ross Campbell, Simon Middleton, Deborah Jeffries and Andrew Lynford are Full Members and Joe McIntyre joins us as an Associate Member.

LIFE MEMBER

Louis F Barfe of Dursley joined the CTA as an Annual Member in May 1997 and has now become a Life Member.

DONATIONS

We are pleased to send sincere thanks to these members who kindly included a donation when renewing their subscriptions: AC Bater, IJ Bellion, RJ Buckler, RA Buckley, LR Carter, M Childs, MR Cleave, M Collins, DWT Corn, RG Dickson, DN Hammond, TA Harris, AN Harris, PJ Hoare, SP Hobbs, RE Howes, JA Hunt, M Hutton, HB Jones, PL Kent, AS Kidd, TJ Lawrence, JM Lewis, MJ Loughlin, JJ McKillop, P Mellor, AF Moore, JH Muir, XM Oxley, J Ramsden, JJ Seabrook, J Shevelan, PV Stevens, BP Stoveld, KS Wheelan, RE Williams, D Williams, JE Williams, JN Wilson and LG Woods.

IN MEMORIAM

Brian Hornsey of Stamford died at the age of 80 – an early member of the CTA and Mercia Cinema Society, for which he wrote many booklets about the cinemas in a number of towns around England; these frequently appeared under his own imprint – *Fuschiaprint* Stamford. Keith McKenzie-Bell of Fordingbridge, who joined the CTA in 2007, has died at the age of 69 and Thomas McPherson of Rothesay, who joined in 2004, died on 2 July.

Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary

SMALL ADS

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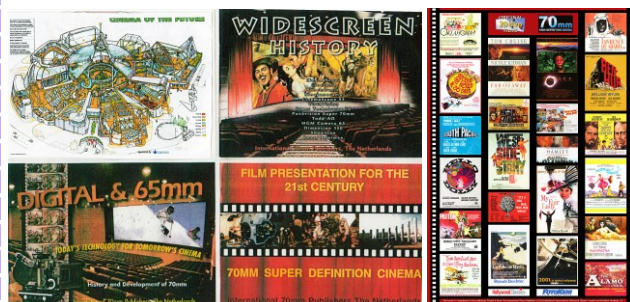
For membership details and sample publications contact

David Shepherd, COS Membership Secretary
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HOLIDAY SNAPS

By Trevor Haynes & Chris Godbold

We've just returned from a short trip to France. This was mainly to cover some minor but scenic railway lines but we also called in to a few towns in Normandy as well as Rennes (Brittany) and were surprised to see so many cinemas still in operation.

Most of the cinemas are in notable buildings and seem to remain in operation. We're afraid that **Cineville** in Rennes, however, does demonstrate the underlying depression in that town (in spite of the smarter **Gaumont** in Esplanade General de Gaulle).



Le Drakkar, Dives, Normandy



Gaumont, Rennes, Brittany



L'Ambience, Blonville-sur-Mer, Normandy



Le Normandy, Argentan, Normandy



Cinema Morny, Deauville, Normandy



Cinéville, Rennes, Brittany



Cinema, Cabourg, Normandy