



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

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BULLETIN

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The Playhouse Alnwick (Northumberland) which is to have a £2.5m revamp; photo taken March 2016



The three-screen Stafford Cinema [ex Odeon/Apollo] which closed in mid-December; photo taken August 2004



ABC & Gaumont Circuit history books available again – see Publications



FROM YOUR EDITOR

In this Bulletin, Hugh Sykes gives us the latest instalment of his 'wanderings', this time around the north of Scotland and Orkney in summer 2017. In a strange coincidence, we had travelled many parts of his route only a few weeks earlier. We too had done the tour of the Castle of Mey, the late Queen Mother's residence and noted that in her 'snug' she had a small TV and DVD player with box sets of *Keeping Up Appearances*, *Dad's Army* and many similar. We wondered if they had been 'planted'. I also noted that, although Thurso and Wick railway stations have only four trains a day, each has a manned ticket office. We took the catamaran *Pentalina* from Gills Bay to Orkney – it was a very smooth and quick crossing.



At the end of last November we travelled the 47 miles down the M1 to the Parkway cinema in Barnsley to see *Murder on the Orient Express* in 70mm. Operator Rob Younger and his assistant put on an excellent presentation with tabs and lights. Rob came on stage before the feature to explain what 70mm was and show a sample to the [sadly small] matinée audience. The staff were very friendly and even the guy who was waiting to clean the auditorium after the show thanked us for coming. We were invited into the box to see the equipment; here is a picture of the gear, showing the 70mm print on the platter. {6208}

I have had a letter from Trevor Williams asking if we could have a feature on the various projection and sound systems now in use – eg 4DX, Real-3D (versus the other 3D systems), iSense, X-Plus, Dolby Atmos, one or two projectors, etc. Could you write it for us? If you could also source some pictures, it would liven up a page of otherwise black text.

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

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor.

It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise; items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor.

Please enclose SAE and state if you require items to be returned, otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.

VISITS: Members and non-members are reminded that they attend visits entirely at their own risk and no responsibility can be accepted by the

Cinema Theatre Association or the owners of the buildings for any accidents or injury sustained during the course of any visit.

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

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
TUESDAY 20 FEBRUARY

VISITS AND EVENTS

A Wander around North Warwickshire and Beyond – Saturday 3 March

Organised by Peter Lea and Richard Norman



The interior of the Grand bingo club, Chapel End, Nuneaton
exterior photo on p28 last Bulletin

Based on CTA member Peter Lea's researches for his recent publication *The Auditorium: A Historical Look at Cinemas in and around North Warwickshire*, he has organised a day out for members to visit some existing and former cinemas. Venues planned to be visited are located in Nuneaton, Chapel End, Bedworth, Hinckley, Ibstock and Coalville; the latter is from Peter's forthcoming book *The Auditorium2: Cinemas of North West Leicestershire* (due out February 2018). A coach will be arranged to take us around the various locations. The itinerary is arranged to include lunch and refreshment breaks at member's own expense.

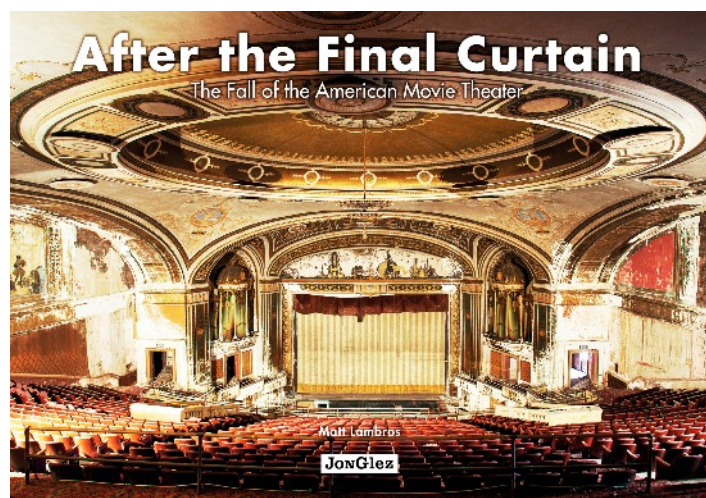
After The Final Curtain

Illustrated talk by Matt Lambros

Saturday 24 February

The Gallery, 5:30pm (doors open 5:00pm)

Our guest speaker is visiting the CTA from the USA where he has acquired a strong reputation for the quality of his photographic and publications work of movie palaces. We are pleased to welcome him to the UK for the first time to sample some of his creative work.



After the Final Curtain

The Fall of the American Movie Theater

Matt Lambros

JonGlez

Most visits are for members only
details in the full Bulletin

CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade I Listed



The façade of the Granada Tooting in March 2004;
there is evidence of vegetation back then

The Conservation Officer of Wandsworth Council has been advised of vegetation growing from the exterior of the Granada in Tooting; this has resulted in an investigation by a freelance surveyor. {9424}

Grade II Listed



The Hyde Park Picture House Leeds in June 2005

The architectural organisation responsible for the proposed alterations to The Hyde Park Picture House in Leeds has been extremely forthcoming in forwarding its initial plans to the Association for comment. Certain aspects thereof require clarification and response, which will be requested and presented respectively during a site visit, which has been suggested by the practice. {1836}

A partnership has been established between a new university appellation UA92 and the area Council into whose remit the Longford at Stretford falls. A plan has been published that reveals an aspiration to utilise the cinema building as a 'student hub' and to integrate a library within the venue. The auditorium currently retains its spatial integrity as a single volume entity; thus concern arises over possible proposals to destroy its unity by subdivision. Representations relating to this issue will therefore be advanced. {13796}

More Casework in the full Bulletin

MISCELLANY

SAUDI CINEMA BAN LIFTED

Saudi Arabia is to lift a 35-year ban on cinemas and allow films to be screened from March 2018. The Kingdom said there will be 300 cinemas by 2030 although it was not clear whether major Hollywood, Bollywood and Arabic releases would be shown and how heavily edited the content would be. A ban on women driving is also expected to be lifted this year.

*Evening Standard, Metro – 11, 12 December;
sent in by Tom Laughlan, Gavin McGrath, Barry Quinton & Martin Tapsell*

LEICESTER SQUARE FACELIFT

A fresh campaign is to be launched to smarten up the image of Leicester Square after research revealed “lingering perceptions” that it is a scruffy and rowdy area. A heart-shaped logo bearing the letters LSQ will be launched and roads around the Square, such as Orange Street and Whitcombe Street will be made more pedestrian-friendly by widening pavements and improving lighting. The Square attracts 250,000 visitors a day. It had a makeover in the run-up to the 2012 Olympics, when a total of £17m was spent on a 7-month revamp.

Evening Standard – 11 December; sent in by Tom Laughlan

PICTURE PERFECT HOMES

A former factory in London's Camden, where the world's first electric movie camera was made, has been turned into homes. Ernest F Moy's patented the Kine camera that was used for some of Hollywood's first films, saw duty in WWI trenches and captured Scott's ill-fated Antarctic expedition in 1912. The flats start at £600,000.

Evening Standard – 25 October – sent in by Tom Laughlan

ORCHESTRAS RETURN TO CINEMAS

Film studios have cottoned on to a new market for their productions. An increasing number are being stripped of their music and repackaged for use with live orchestras in concert halls. The Royal Albert Hall has presented *Interstellar* and *Beauty and the Beast* (as well as hosting premières). Others to have received the treatment are *La La Land*, *Jaws*, *2001* and *The Wizard of Oz*. For older films there are often difficulties in tracking down the scores; some were just thrown away!

Sent in by Jon Williams

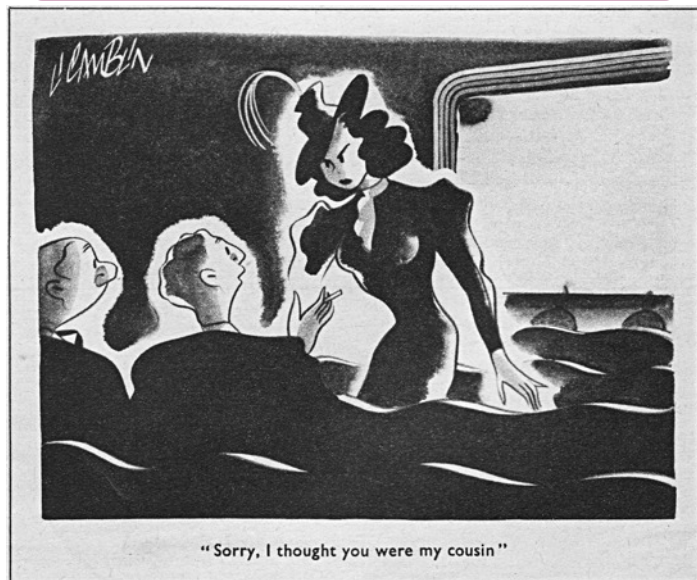
END OF CINEMA PROJECTION?

Samsung and Sony are developing LED cinema screens. They claim high resolution [4k-16k], low power consumption [they're off when showing 'black'] and a 15-year life, twice that of most digital projectors. A screen 40ft-50ft wide would cost around \$700,000 but costs are expected to fall. When the total cost of ownership gets close to projectors, changes will be imminent; this is expected by 2030.

Red Shark – 12 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

Carl adds: Where do the speakers go?

CARTOON CORNER



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

Available Again – Two of the CTA's Most Popular Circuit Histories

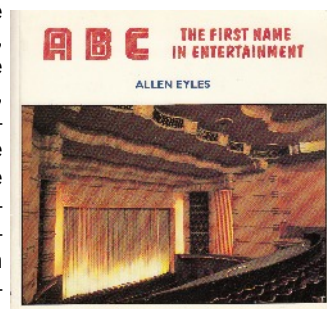
ABC: The First Name in Entertainment and Gaumont British Cinemas.

Both written by Allen Eyles

To celebrate our 50th anniversary year, we have arranged limited-edition reprints of these two popular books, giving members who didn't purchase them originally the chance to add them to their collection at reasonable prices. The books sold out soon after they were published and do not often come up on the second-hand market at an affordable price. These reprints are only available from the CTA Sales Officer.

ABC: The First Name in Entertainment

First published in 1993, this is the story of how Associated British Cinemas became the largest single chain of picture houses in the UK, selling some 6 million tickets a week at its peak. The book examines the creation of the circuit, describes the cinemas, which were purpose-built to the designs of WR Glen and others, acquisitions of existing cinemas, the booking policy, live shows and organ interludes, the response to 3-D and CinemaScope, the decline in attendances leading to subdivision and the first step into the multiplex era. There is a detailed listing of more than 600 cinemas that were part of the ABC chain and the titles of all the main films given an ABC release from 1937 to 1979, plus an array of rare illustrations of cinemas and company advertising. PLUS – a newly written introduction by Allen Eyles, highlighting developments since the book was written, including the short-lived return of the ABC name.



164 pages, paperback, fully illustrated
£17.50 plus £3 postage.

Gaumont British Cinemas

First published in 1996 and reprinted in 1999, this book tells the story of how Gaumont cinemas formed one of the three national circuits in Britain during the boom years of picture-going. Generously illustrated with photographs of the cinemas, as well as examples of advertising and publicity, this book recalls the history of the circuit as well as the formation and often turbulent life of its parent company, Gaumont-British. Besides the style of the cinemas it describes how they were operated, how the chain became part of the J Arthur Rank Empire and how its identity was slowly whittled away until its name in Britain was consigned to memory. Included is a detailed listing of more than 400 cinemas that were part of the circuit and the titles of all the films given a Gaumont release from 1932 onwards.



224 pages, paperback, fully illustrated,
£17.50 plus £3 postage.

SPECIAL OFFER

buy both ABC and Gaumont together for £30.00.

Please add £3.00 to your order for post and packing

To Order: Please send cheque/postal order payable to Cinema Theatre Association to the Sales Officer, Jeremy Buck, 34 Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN, OR send credit/debit card details, including number, expiry date and security code, OR order online through the CTA website: [www.cta-uk.org/shop] where you can order using Paypal.

* ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER OF COPIES ARE AVAILABLE! *

PUBLICATIONS

Back Numbers Available

BULLETINS

We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 2015 are £4.00 per year (6 issues); individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2016 and 2017 are £4.00 per copy. All prices include postage. There are some issues available from earlier years, 1970 to 1986 – please send enquiries to the Sales Officer.

PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

Listed below are the back numbers of Picture House that are still available, along with the main articles the particular issue contains. There are also available a few second-hand copies of out-of-print issues 9, 10, 14/15, 16, 20, 22, 23 & 24, priced £5.00 each, plus postage.

No 6	£1.50	Television in the Cinema; Atherley Southampton; Hippodrome, Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; ABC in NW London.
No 17	£3.00	Special Issue featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; Ideal Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; Granada Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; Albert Hall Sheffield; Regal Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Gaumont Managers; Carlton Swansea; Committee's Choice.
No 26	£4.50	Paramount Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; Electric Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New Victoria/ Apollo ; Whiteladies Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; Torbay Cinema; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; Apollo Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: Essoldo – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the Essoldo Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen: Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New Victoria Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	Beaufort Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophane lighting; Imitations of Odeon ; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; The Clifton Circuit; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the Electric Palace Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; Palace Conwy; Carlton Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two Regals ; Odeon North Finchley; Majestic Oxford; Films at the Royal Albert Hall .
No 40	£6.00	Tolmer Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham – a Granada man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50th Anniversary; Plaza Stockport; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Majestic Leeds; Pascal J Stienlet.

AND WHERE TO KEEP THOSE PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINES?

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



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.

Still Available (reviewed in previous issues)

Electric Pictures

Film makers and cinemas of Worthing & Shoreham
£12.99 plus postage.

Off to t'Flicks in old Aireborough

Guiseley, Rawdon & Yeadon – £9.95 plus postage.

Screen Stories – Lewes

£8.99 plus postage.

Ordering

For books and other items please add £3.00 for post and packing for orders up to £30.00 in value; £6.00 for orders from £30.01 to £40.00 and £11.00 for orders above £40.01.

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 above.
please add £3.00 for postage.

SCOTTISH WANDERINGS

By Hugh Sykes



The Prize Gretna [2]

We travelled many miles with Johnson's of Henley-in-Arden, 25 June to 1 July. Our first proper stop was at Gretna Green, at the 'wedding' place. Sadly it would have been a rather long walk down into Gretna itself, so here is a photo of the Prize taken in August 2009. The coach continued to Cumbernauld for an overnight stay.



The former Regal Pitlochry [1]

26 June and northwards, pausing briefly at Pitlochry. Time for just a quick visit to the grade B listed station with a short walk to the Regal in West Moulin Road. It is now part of the Atholl Fitness Centre with a new building and entrance on the left hand side. The former cinema still retains its doors c1950 with Parmeko sound, 500 seats, prices 9d to 2/3, pros width 24ft. We were unable to view the Festival Theatre.



The former Palace Inverness in September 2008 [2]

We were then promised a visit to Inverness, so we left the coach north of the river for a walk over the Ness, viewing the Premier Inn hotel built in 2010 on the site of the Palace c1950 BTH sound, 1,021 seats, pros width 28ft, prices 1/- to 3/-! It was open 1939-1963 then bingo to 2006, empty to demolition. Up into the shops for Ann and the station for me, we walked part of Academy Street; alas the Empire, La Scala and Playhouse are no more. I believe part of the upper frontage and façade of the La Scala survive – Estate Agents? Current films are

shown at the seven-screen Vue some way out of town. The Eden Court Theatre over by the Cathedral was staging *The Railway Children* in its 800-seat main auditorium with two screens for films. From the *Oban Times* a heart-warming advert for the Screen Machine, Scotland's Mobile Cinema, an 80-seat digital cinema touring many communities, some on the Western Isles. Good luck and best wishes to the team.



The remains of the Pavilion Wick [1]

Still northbound for our two-night stay in Wick but not before a comfort stop in Helmsdale; a very quick visit to the station (grade B listed) and the local shop. Since found, in the 1950 KYB, a 16mm static cinema, the Drill Hall run by John Smith of Dornoch (more later). Unfortunately the coach driver took us round the back of the town; I did look but nothing was located, except for a superb colonnaded Freemasons Hall – a gem. After settling in and a meal in Wick, Ann and I went on a walkabout. Wick has suffered from out-of-town stores so the centre is now quiet. I regret to advise that the burnt-out shell of the former Pavilion still stands on the High Street after a fire in 1996! Part of the frontage is painted blue with a banner from 2008 promising a new future – leisure, disco etc – but there it remains.



The former Breadalbane Wick in September 2008 [2]

Now Wick had a second cinema, the Breadalbane¹, which we found off the Main Street, being situated amongst housing, a school and an RC Church in Breadalbane Terrace, Pultneytown. It too is still there but derelict. In c1950 BA sound, 460 seats, prices 10d to 2/6, stage depth 12ft, two dressing rooms, pros width 34ft! It is built on the side of a hill, with a natural slope down to the stage. It closed as the Dounreay Social Club in 2007 and is boarded-up at ground level with upper windows intact; holes in the roof can be seen. I did venture down the left hand side of the building past two very derelict fire exits (which were not entered), the steps lead to a rear fenced yard. A great shame this venue has been allowed to go into dereliction; it might/could have been an asset to the town, ie theatre, cinema, civic or community usage.

¹ Breadalbane is a region of the southern/central Scottish Highlands, traditionally comprising the watershed of Loch Tay (ie Glen Dochart, Glen Lochay and the banks of Loch Tay itself). The *Atholl and Breadalbane Gathering* is a popular 2/4 March tune for the Great Highland Bagpipes.



The former Picture House Thurso [2]

On the next day (27 June) with a local 'Pentland' coach, we toured the Castle of Mey and John-O'Groats with only a few pre-school-holidays people about and no midges the day was memorable. We also did some walking, including Wick station. On 28 June, leaving Wick for Scrabster Harbour, we passed through Thurso. On the left lay the former Picture House on St George's Street c1950 BA sound, 484 seats, continuous Mon-Fri, 3 shows Sat, prices 6d to 2/9, pros width 29ft. Is the nightclub therein still open? It could do with some TLC as some guttering is blocked. I did buy (in Wick) two local papers, being very pleased to find the Merlin Cinema Thurso advertising in both papers; two screens, 152 & 88 seats, ex All Star Factory. Sadly on this occasion we did not see either this cinema or the most northerly station in Great Britain.

We crossed the Pentland Firth on a lovely calm day on board the MV Hamnavoe, heading for Orkney and Stromness Harbour. The previous Saturday evening arrival at 8:30pm had not docked until 11pm due to heavy seas!



The Skara Brae Coffee Cart [1]



The Neolithic settlement at Skara Brae [2]

A grand tour of ancient and historic sites was organised for us, including Skara Brae, which we enjoyed. I noted a local service, the Skara Brae Coffee Cart, where a young lady was kept very busy serving hot drinks.

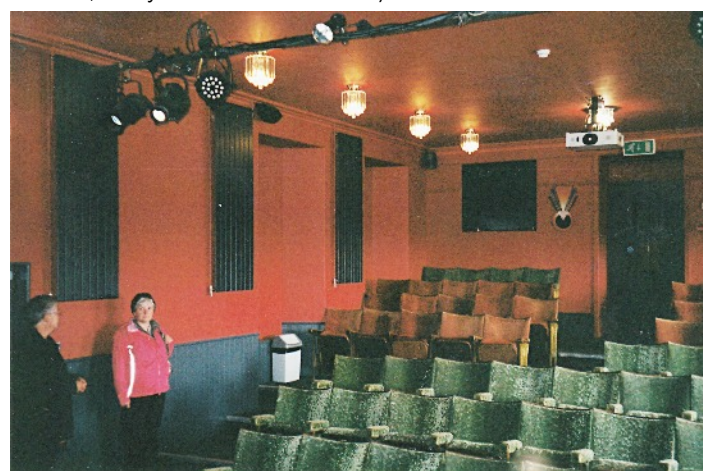
We stayed at the Stromness Hotel by the Harbour – an excellent venue, rooms, food and service were the best. After our evening meal Ann and I went for a walk in this very interesting town. Starting in Victoria Street, we noted along the way some very high shop doorways – must be over 10ft – were the Vikings that tall? Turning right into Church Road, on the left is the former Free Church, labelled Stromness Town Hall. The Town Hall hosts all kinds of events, show, recitals and West Side Cinema. The screen is attached to the organ case (not known if organ is in working order) and rolls down for presentations. At the top of Church Road is the Community Centre. Now Victoria Place leads into Graham Place then Dundas Street; we were aware of how narrow these streets were – two-way with a 20mph speed limit. Right into Heellie-hole Road where in 1950 the KYB lists the Stromness Town Hall Cinema (pop 1,612, Kalee sound, 282 seats, prices 6d to 2/-, pros width 20ft, one house two days a week. Unfortunately our walk did not go here – but more on this later (photos in Orkney archive at Kirkwall).



Stromness Town Hall [1]

Next day (29 June) we elected to do our own itinerary for the island of Hoy. Local bus 5 from Stromness to Houton Ferry for the MV Hoyhead ferry to Lyness on Hoy (£4.30 each return) with a two minute walk to the Scapa Flow Visitor Centre and Museum. This was the former naval base of WWI and WWII; as well as the site I wanted to see the most northerly preserved narrow-gauge locos preserved in Great Britain, with hopefully a former cinema on the island. Well, after a thorough search we found track, wagons and steam crane but no locos. We entered their shop, explaining my interest and a letter sent prior. The lady behind the counter told us, "About three weeks ago the locos were moved to storage in Kirkwall before going down to South Wales for a new railway at a Fire Museum." Well, I nearly sank through the floor!

Somewhat shaken, I asked her for directions on foot to the Gable End Theatre, which she gave. We paid her compliments and started walking. We had not gone ¼ mile when a car appeared. It was the lady from the shop. Feeling very sorry for us, she offered not only to take us the 1½ miles to the theatre but she was also the keyholder and a full visit was on. Ms Jude Callister is also the theatre secretary. Conversion of a small school into a fine 75-seat raked venue for cinema (roll-down screen, digital projector on ceiling), theatre, plays, choirs, recitals etc. It has quite a deep stage (no flytower) lighting rigs, two dressing rooms. There is a welcoming bar/lounge on arrival. Doors and tip-up seating are from the lamented Phoenix cinema in Kirkwall, sadly demolished in 1998/9.



The interior and a door in the Gable End Theatre on Hoy [1]



The exterior of the Gable End Theatre on Hoy ^[1]

We gave our thanks and a donation to the theatre. The lady then gave us a lift to the Naval Cemetery where I had a few moments – very moving. Afterwards we walked back to the centre and onto the ferry. It was a flat crossing back to Houton then a bus to Stromness. I later learnt that the former RN Cinema, which we saw clad in corrugated iron and steel girders on the left as we left Lyness, had a stage with tabs but a flat floor and stacking chairs for multi-use.



The interior of the New Phoenix Kirkwall ^[2]

The present New Phoenix cinema is located within the Picaquoy Leisure Center in Kirkwall. We had a good walk around the town, finding some sites of interest. The former garage of D Pearce in Burnmouth Road has the roof from Flotta's cinema, which was removed leaving the projection room end and two side walls. On Junction Road next door to the Post Office are some flats, which I was told have a cinematic connection, although very much rebuilt. Between the front door and windows is a plaque to James Petrie Chalmers Jnr 1866-1912, who was a figure in the early American film industry.



Walking down Albert Street, we came upon a Launderama shop. A lady in a bookshop advised me this was the site of the former Albert cinema; 300 seats, 8 June 1931 to 8 May 1947, when it was destroyed by fire. We couldn't find the former Arts Centre / Temperance Hall. Ann and I ventured into the library and upstairs to the archive. Wow – they have got a lot of cinema material; lots on the Phoenix (1955-1998), some Stromness and Naval Cinema photographs plus two school projects done by pupils about Orkney Cinemas. I was allowed to view both – they are excellent but copyright does not permit copying in any form. We got the bus back to Stromness for our final night on Orkney. Crossing the again calm Pentland Firth en-route to Scrabster, a past friend from Leamington Spa was also on board – small world!

Heading south, now on 30 June, we went through Brora, which I have since found on *Cinema Treasures* had a Drill Hall with 350 seats in Gower Street. But we did stop at Dornoch, which until 1960 had a light railway with an ex-BRWR 16xx 0-6-0 PT's working; the station buildings and platform are intact. As at Helmsdale earlier, here too we had a 16mm cinema in the Cathedral Hall. Time did not allow any further wanderings – has any member got details please?



The Victoria Hall / Picture House Kingussie ^[1]

So further south we got to Kingussie and our last hotel and overnight stay. We soon found the former Victoria Hall / Picture House in Spey Street, very close to the railway station, ex CAC, 309 seats, 9d to 2/-, pros 20ft. Both the Scottish Episcopal Church next door and the former cinema were gutted by fire in 1999, leaving the original entrance and walls of the cinema. They have now been joined with the walls of the church and re-roofed with a modern structure. It reopened in 2003 as the Badenoch Library and Sports Centre, being very popular.



The Town Hall Moffat ^[1]

On Saturday 1 July we departed for home, with a short stop at Moffat, where I photographed the Town Hall. We departed Kingussie at 9:30am and after three comfort stops arrived home for 8:30pm. It had been well worth the long journey.

Photos by ^[1] the author, ^[2] Harry Rigby



An early postcard [date unknown] of the Pavilion Wick

NEWSREEL

The items in this section are taken mainly from press cuttings from local newspapers. Although their factual accuracy has been checked by Allen Eyles, there may be minor errors in reporting dates or other detail. Allen has also provided additional comments, where indicated.

Photos by Harry Rigby within entry, except where stated.

A number in curly brackets {nnnnn} is the reference for the Cinema Treasures website. Go to: cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn

ABERDEEN

Screen ② at the ten-screen Cineworld Union Square has become a 4DX screen at a cost of £450,000. It is only the second in Scotland. {44719}

Evening Express, Aberdeen – 3 November

ALNWICK (Northumberland)

The future of the Playhouse has been secured as it prepares for a £2.5m refurbishment. Work will start in summer 2018 and is due for completion in May 2019. A section of the ground floor will be converted into a community hub, including a library, tourist information and customer service facilities. The contracts include an agreement that the local authority will grant a new 50-year lease to the Playhouse Trust, allowing it to continue. {47495}

The Chronicle, Newcastle – 15 December; photo on front cover

ASHFORD (Kent)

The new six-screen Picturehouse being built at Eldwick Place is set to open at Christmas 2018.

Kent Messenger – 30 November

BANGOR (Gwynedd)

An unknown operator has signed up for a new ten-screen cinema to be built at Parc Bryn Cegin.

Daily Post, Wales – 2 December

BASILDON (Essex)

Planning permission has been granted for a ten-screen cinema at East Square. No operator has been named.

Basildon Echo – 11 December

BIRMINGHAM (Harborne)

There was a small fire at the grade II listed Royalty on 15 November. The venue opened in October 1930 and films ceased in November 1963. It was latterly used for bingo, which closed around 2012; the building has been empty since. See Casework p6. {33866}

Birmingham Mail – 15 November; sent in by Ken Roe

BISHOPS STORTFORD (Herts)

The Council has unveiled plans for a new cultural centre in Old River Lane. If approved, it would include a 500-seat theatre, a three or four-screen cinema and a café/bar.

Hertfordshire Mercury – 23 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

BLACKPOOL (Lancs)



A self-storage facility is planned for part of the building that used to be the Princess cinema. Peter Bowden, a director of owners Worldwide Clubs Ltd claimed the business has been affected by a decline in Blackpool's night-time economy. The Princess originally opened in December

1912. It was taken over by ABC in April 1929 and closed in December 1981. After brief periods as a music venue and an indoor market it was converted into a nightclub, opening in October 1992. {6550}

Sent in by Raymond Dolling; photo taken June 2009

BLUEWATER (Kent)

The Showcase Cinema de Lux has added four more screens to the existing 13. All have recliner seats, one having a wall-to-wall format XPlus screen measuring 64 foot wide by 27 foot high. The extra capacity was timed to open concurrently with the release of *Star Wars* on 14 December. PS: The Vue at Westwood Cross (Thanet) is showing *Star Wars* 33 times a day, beginning at 06.30!

Kent Messenger, advertising; sent in by Martin Tapsell

BOURNEMOUTH

Twenty more jobs will be created at the new ten-screen Odeon BH2, thanks to its continuing success. Since it opened last February, more than 600,000 people have been through the doors. {55149}

Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 25, 26 October; sent in by John Forster

Plans to demolish the bulk of the former ABC (but leaving the façade) and build a block of 62 flats have been rejected by the Council.

Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 31 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Philip Stevens

BRIDGWATER (Somerset)

The new town centre leisure complex, which includes a four to six-screen cinema, should be complete by 2020. Scott Cinemas, which has a two-screen operation in the former Odeon is involved in the discussions.

Bridgwater Mercury – 21 November

BRIGHTON



The grade II* listed Hippodrome has been sold to a developer, Aized Sheikh, who also owns the Teville Gate development in Worthing. He has written publicly of his intention to turn the Hippodrome into a luxury hotel and apartment block “with a concert, theatre and banqueting venue”. It opened in August 1901 with 1,981 seats, a Frank Matcham conversion of a former skating rink. It closed as a theatre in early 1964 and was used for bingo until the early 2000s. The previous owners were the Academy Music Group. {36884}

The Stage – 9 November; The Argus, Brighton – 10, 11, 16 November; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson; photo taken March 2009

A group of deaf people said they had no choice but to leave an advertised subtitled screening of the new *Star Wars* film after subtitles were turned off at the Odeon. According to Odeon, a technical fault meant the film could not continue with captions and offered refunds. The film was restarted with subtitles but some members of the audience complained about them.

BBC News website – 19 December; sent in by Geoff Gill

BROADSTAIRS (Kent)

The Palace cinema has begun a monthly series of Sunday silents, accompanied by silent film pianist Lillian Henley. The opening film on 17 December was *The General* starring Buster Keaton.

Sent in by Martin Tapsell

CAMPBELTOWN (Argyll & Bute)

The £3.5m renovation of the A-listed Picture House has been completed. The doors were opened to allow the public to view the venue before the official opening. The restoration has been based on detailed archival research. Amongst the elements of the 1935 design that have been reinstated are the repainted ceiling, the colour scheme for the 'wee houses' either side of the proscenium and the return of the popular 'love seats'. The main screen now seats 193 in stalls and circle and there is a 52-seat second screen to the rear of the main building. The Society of Antiquaries (Scotland) has listed the Picture House as one of Scotland's Six Hidden Gems: [www.campbeltownpicturehouse.co.uk] {16090}

The Scotsman – 15, 24 November; *Metro*, *Campbeltown Courier* – 24 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth; also sent in by Stewart Kidd

CHIPPENHAM (Wilts)



At about 1:30pm on Boxing Day a fire broke out in the battery room and wiring at the Astoria – fire crews attended and had the fire under control quickly. I visited the cinema on Wednesday 27 December; a large sign on the door said that due "to a major electrical problem" the cinema was closed until further notice. I was told that the cinema would not open for the "rest of the year" and that the extent of the damage was unknown.

The Astoria is long overdue for a full refurbishment. The old Angel Bingo club in the stalls area has been empty for years. I was told that refurbishment had been planned for January (2018?). This had been proposed in 2015 but with the fire the plans could now be moved forward. I was a projectionist there for several years and the battery room formed part of the box area (enclosed behind a 1930s fire door) so I have no idea if the projectors/sound equipment have suffered as a result of the fire. There were engineers on site assessing the extent of the damage so a fuller report will be forthcoming. Sadly for the foreseeable future Chippenham is without a cinema since 1914! {24537}

Sent in by David Reeves; photo taken March 2006

CHRISTCHURCH (Dorset)

Major repair works to the Regent Centre will cost around £500,000 and take four months to complete. The defects in the south wall are likely to be remedied in summer 2019. Scaffolding was due to be put up before Christmas with work to install restraints carried out in January. The Council owners are being urged by management to schedule the works carefully or "risk crippling the theatre". {24540}

Daily Echo, *Bournemouth* – 1 December; sent in by Philip Stevens

CIRENCESTER (Glos)

Planning permission for a new Everyman cinema was due to expire in November but demolition at the site started just in time to retain the consent. Completion is expected "within 15 months".

Wilts & Glos Standard – 2, 30 November

COALVILLE (Leics)

Flutters Bingo in the former Regal closed suddenly on 1 November. The cinema opened in November 1933 with 1,200 seats in stalls and circle. It had a fully-equipped stage and Holophane lighting. Films ceased in May 1960 and it has been a bingo club since April 1963. The CTA visited in April 2007.

BBC news website, *Nottingham*; sent in by Terry Hanstock & Ken Roe

COLCHESTER (Essex)

Another legal battle has been launched against the proposed development at Stanway, which includes a multiplex cinema. The news comes only a week after a High Court judge threw out a previous challenge.

East Anglian Daily Times – 23 November

DARLINGTON

The Hippodrome has reopened after a £13.7m restoration. The venue had been dark for 18 months. The CTA visited this during the works last April as the Civic Theatre – see p16 Bulletin 51/4. {26574}

The Stage – 30 November; sent in by R David Simpson

DARTFORD (Kent)

A six-screen cinema is being proposed as part of a development of the Westgate area in the town centre. Permission is expected to be applied for in summer 2018 and, if granted, construction could start in spring 2019. No operator has been named.

News Shopper, *Greenwich & Charlton* – 16 October; *Sheerness Times Guardian* – 18 October

DOVER (Kent)

The new six-screen 909-seat Cineworld at the St Lames Leisure Park is scheduled to open on 2 February. Special rates of £2.50 will apply to children at weekends and school holidays.

Dover Mercury – 29 November; *Kent-on-Line* – 14 December; sent in by Martin Tapsell

DOWNPATRICK (Co Down, Northern Ireland)



The six-screen Eclipse cinema has been taken over by Omniplex. It opened in June 2009. {43860}

Down Recorder – 8 November; photo taken September 2014

DUDLEY

Vandals have attacked the former Hippodrome, forcing campaigners hoping to restore the theatre to hire security guards. They say the vandals could put the project being schedule as unnecessary resources are being spent on the problem. The Council leader had previously said that he believed "not much progress" had been made by campaigners, who are requesting a 20-year extension to their existing five-year lease. {41631}

Express & Star – 25 October, 4, 10 December; *Stourbridge Chronicle* – 7 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth, Ivan Harris & Chris Ingram

EASTBOURNE (East Sussex)

The Council owners have granted the lease of the Royal Hippodrome Theatre to Alex and Debbie Adams. The couple have been producing summer shows at the grade II listed Hippodrome for the past five years and run a theatre school for children. The CTA held their AGM there in 2010. {46239}

The Argus, *Brighton* – 23 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

EDINBURGH (Leith)

The grade B listed former State could reopen as the Leith Theatre. A fundraising campaign hopes to realise between £8m and £10m. It opened in December 1936 with 1,700 seats and films ceased in May 1972. It became a bingo hall and latterly a nightclub. Plans for a residential development on the site retain and refurbish the cinema. A planning application has been submitted. {23261}

The Herald, *Glasgow* – 3 November; *The Scotsman* – 30 November; *Scottish Daily Express* – 8 December; photo taken November 2006

The twelve-screen Vue at Ocean Terminal has been upgraded with fully reclining seats in all auditoria. Prices have not been increased. {27068}

Edinburgh Evening News – 2 November

Five more pages of newsreel
in the full Bulletin

LETTERS

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Re Hugh Sykes' wanderings in Framlingham (p16 last Bulletin). The Regal Cinema was situated at 15 New Road, Framlingham and was still showing films as late as 1962 – see programme above. However, in February 1963 planning permission was granted for change of use from a cinema to light industrial use. In December 1963 planning permission was also granted for alterations to form workshops and a storeroom. By 1975 it was a commercial vehicle workshop possibly operated by AG Potter. In 1992 planning permission was granted for change of use to a hard-play area for the adjacent primary school. According to *Cinema Treasures* the building was demolished c2011 and is now occupied by housing. It can be seen top centre in this aerial photo. {56683}

Terry Hanstock

VOLUME LEVELS

I was really interested to read David A Ellis' letter in the last Bulletin about sound levels – it would be a lot of fun going to the cinema with him, as I like my sound LOUD and I positively welcome being blasted out of my seat! So, depending on the sound level at the time, he would be covering his ears while I would be straining to hear!! To me, it's all part of the 'immersive' cinema experience but there is a rather more serious side, as I was once told by a cinema manager that the two most frequent complaints he received were that the soundtrack is too loud – or it's too quiet! Mostly, of course, this is a matter of personal taste but, leaving that aside, David's letter made me wonder whether there is an 'official' level? I vaguely recall being told some time ago that auditoria are checked by some scientific method and the sound level is set specifically for each one. Is this correct? Will a multi-screen cinema have different settings, calculated for each auditorium, or does 'one size fit all'? Or are the settings left up to the judgement of the projectionists/managers? (Surely one thing is for certain: I can't imagine nowadays that the volume is adjusted according to the number of patrons!) I would welcome comments from projectionists / audio technicians, especially as this can be such a controversial issue – as demonstrated by the reactions of David and me to current sound levels!

David Simpson

KALEE PROJECTOR



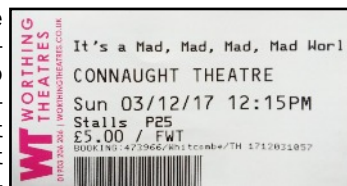
Regards the article by Hugh Sykes on page 16 of the last CTA Bulletin on his visit to Rundle at New Bolingbroke, the Kalee 12 projector in question was a 1931 model, which I got through the Projected Picture Trust. I understand it came from cinema at Bexleyheath in Kent. For about five years I visited some of our local steam fairs here in Lincolnshire with the projector and other cinema memorabilia on display. The projector was in full working order apart from the sound system and was always the star attraction of the exhibition. After finishing with the display, I donated it to Alan Rundle for safe keeping, as I didn't want it to go to the scrapyard.

Maurice Brader (photo)

ROADSHOW MADNESS

I was born in April 1967, three months after the CTA was founded. This means I was too young to experience the 'roadshow presentations' of certain big films that seemed popular during the post war period and which CTA members have often fondly reflected upon in issues of this Bulletin. The whole idea of showing a movie with a certain pomp – including an initial limited release, overture music, an intermission and a souvenir programme – has always appealed to me, particularly nowadays when even a hint of presentation is absent from films shown by the major cinema chains, no matter how hyped the release is. Imagine my delight, then, when on a Sunday in December 2017 the Connaught Theatre in Worthing, West Sussex, hosted a roadshow presentation of the 1963 comedy *It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World*. The Connaught is a traditional single-screen venue that still uses festoons at each performance and this screening was preceded with a short talk by Dave Norris, known for Mark Kermode's *The Last Projectionist Standing*, as well as the overture. The intermission was even true to director Stanley Kramer's original roadshow vision. Not wanting the audience to lose the momentum of this fast-moving comedy, Kramer insisted on playing police radio reports updating patrons on how the characters were faring during the interval. These audio interludes were as entertaining as the film itself that featured lead roles by Spencer Tracy, Ethel Merman and Sid Caesar as well as blink-and-you-miss-them cameos from comedy legends Buster Keaton, Edward Everett Horton and the Three Stooges. More than fifty patrons bought tickets for this one-off screening and that number included teenagers as well as older folk who could remember the original release. It was a thoroughly enjoyable experience and one that my wife and I were pleased we attended. CTA members should check out the Connaught website as the staff hinted that there was a possibility of another roadshow presentation if there was enough public interest.

Mike Whitcombe



**Four more pages of letters
in the full Bulletin**

WILF WANDERS WEST

By Wilf Watters



Shepherd's Bush in 1927 with [L-R] the Empire, Pyke's and Pavilion

Taking once more a ramble to find old cinemas, I started in West London with a look at Shepherd's Bush Green, which at one time must have provided a variety alternative to Leicester Square with its many places of entertainment. With the excellent aid of Rachel Marks, who spends a lot of time helping out at the CTA archives and finding photographs for me, I stepped out West. The Green did at one time have a quite a number of cinemas open. The music hall, the Empire, is still there (where 50 years ago I was a stage electrician!). Then next door is a Pyke's original cinema, going through many owners over the years (including as an Australian theme pub not so long ago) and since semi-derelict due to planning arguments. Then there was the huge Pavilion, a Gaumont Super Palace, this has been turned into a hotel and private apartments.



The Shepherd's Bush Empire [L] and Pavilion [R] in November 2017

But there had been other cinemas on the Green. Almost next door at number 57A was the Palladium. The BKS year book quotes it was open in 1918. The block was redeveloped many years ago. Across the Green at 92 Uxbridge Road was the Kings Hall, open in 1918 in a building constructed in 1910 and is now a 'Superdrug' store, where I got some strange looks from the manager when lurking around the door to establish the street number that wasn't there – how the postman manages, I don't know. There had been a Park cinema in Goldhawk Road but no information where it had been. Of course much rebuilding had gone on in this area. Before leaving the 'Bush' I should mention that for over twenty years in a shopping precinct a multiplex has operated; it's nowadays a Vue with eleven screens, seemingly operated by a man in the sweet counter.

Moving on to Chiswick High Road, where can be found a little row of four shops that were the Electric Theatre on the corner of Duke Road. It had opened in 1911 changed to the Coliseum and closed in 1933 as the Tatler. Then it was turned into four shops, which still exist today.



The Electric Chiswick today



The Electric Theatre of 1911 on Chiswick High Road



The Royal Chiswick as a furniture store [L] and antique shop [R]

Moving on, at 160 Chiswick High road can be found the 'Old Cinema' a new name for an antique store. This was the Royal and had a most original first floor contraption, which to my mind didn't look like any early movie-house. It had been a second-hand furniture store, now it's a posh antique establishment. Some of the original cinema features have been retained, such a splendid skylight but the old auditorium seems to have gone and just displays occupy the space.

I could have spent many more days searching out old cinemas but finish with an Odeon at Isleworth. Just the frontage has been retained and it has the 1930s look about it. Many thanks to Rachel for finding the pictures at the CTA Archive.



The former Odeon Isleworth