



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

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The former Elite Ashbourne (Derbys) to which film may return – see Newsreel p17; photo taken July 2011



The nine-screen Odeon Silverlink (North Tyneside) which has recently added an IMAX screen – see Newsreel p24; photo taken September 2009

FROM YOUR EDITOR

As I write this at the beginning of March, the editorial premises – and most of the rest of the country – is blanketed under several inches of snow. Being unable to go out did have an advantage in that I could stay at home and work on the Bulletin. The modern miracle of electronic communications and the Internet means that I can do research from my desk, without having to go to the library. I can also send messages and get replies the same day. The proof of the Bulletin also goes to the printers electronically. We wonder how we used to manage without this modern technology. However, we still rely on the postie to deliver the printed version through our letterboxes.

I had several messages expressing surprise at finding the Odeon in London's Leicester Square closed and asking if I had any more information. We were surprised too. Although the closure had been trailed last summer and reported on p5 of Bulletin 51/4, no date had been assigned. It closed suddenly at the beginning of January and very little further information has been given; see Newsreel p22.



I had more messages enquiring if I knew which cinema doubled for the Roxy in Oxford in an episode of the ITV series *Endeavour* transmitted on 11 February. Within a few days, several members emailed me to say the the exterior and foyer scenes were filmed at the Carlton/ABC in Essex Road, Islington, North London. The auditorium used was the Broadway Theatre, Catford, South London. An electronic organ and an illuminated orchestra rail were installed for the production. The Broadway still retains its original Compton theatre organ but this wasn't used. The CTA has arranged a visit here on 12 May – see opposite. The projection equipment for the filming was provided by our friends in the PPT – it looked to me like a GK21 with President arc [above].

In my last editorial I asked if anyone could write us a feature on modern projection and sound systems. Well, I've had a volunteer and an article is in preparation. We hope to include this in the next Bulletin.

From time to time, I get sent what look like photos taken off a computer screen. Often they are distorted and have colour aberrations. Did you know that, if you are using a Windows PC, the button marked "Print Screen", usually at the top right of your keyboard, will copy the contents of your screen into the Windows clipboard? You can then paste this into a Word document (or any program that supports the clipboard) and send that to me as an attachment, or even paste it into an email message. Don't worry about the taskbar or anything else on your screen as I can easily crop them off. It all helps to improve the quality of your Bulletin. I suspect there is a similar feature on Apple Mac computers but I don't know what it is – can anyone tell me?

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

ERRATA

On page 25 of the last Bulletin it should be Kingston not Croydon where Curzon are opening a four-screen cinema in the Bentall Centre.

Spotted by Jeremy Buck, Tim McCullen & Trevor Williams

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
FRIDAY 20 APRIL**

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.

Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby

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

VISITS AND EVENTS

Double Feature: a visit to Catford and Eltham.

Saturday 12 May – organised by Ray Ritmeester.

We have arranged a tour of the **Broadway Theatre**, Catford at 1pm and then a visit to the **Mecca Bingo**, former **Odeon Eltham Hill** later in the afternoon.



The Broadway Theatre Catford in September 2004

The Broadway Theatre opened as the Catford Public Halls in June 1932 as part of the Town Hall and was designed by Bradshaw, Gass and Hope for multi-purpose use. It was initially equipped for screening silent films only in the main hall. It was later re-named the Lewisham Theatre, becoming the Broadway in the 1980s.



The Odeon/Gaumont Eltham Hill in July 2006

The second venue we shall visit is the former **Odeon Eltham Hill**, located on Eltham Hill at the corner of Kingsground. The Odeon opened on 14 April 1938. It was later renamed the **Gaumont** as it was very close to the other Odeon in Eltham at Well Hall. It was closed by the Rank Organisation on 19 June 1967 and converted into a Top Rank Club, operating today as a **Mecca Bingo Club**.

We shall meet outside the **Broadway Theatre** from 12:45pm to commence our tour at 1pm.

Getting There: The Broadway Theatre is situated in Catford Broadway, with Catford and Catford Bridge Stations about 5 minutes' walk away. Many bus routes pass the theatre, including routes 47, 54, 75, 124, 136, 171 & 199. We shall continue later by bus to reach the Mecca, Eltham Hill, please bring your Mecca membership card to speed up admission.

This is a free visit, although notes will be available on the day for a small charge. Please register using the events' registration phone number 020 8800 8393, leaving your name and contact number; any other queries please by email to [r.ritmeester@sky.com].

Coming Soon

To Hull and Back – 27 to 29 July

Incorporating the CTA Annual General Meeting during the afternoon of Saturday 28 June. A visit organised by David and Margaret Williams to Hull and the surrounding area, following on from its tenure as the UK City of Culture in 2017. Further details with travel and hotel arrangements will be in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Other Events of Interest [not organised by the CTA]

Details of these events are given in good faith but the editor or the CTA cannot be responsible for any inaccuracies; please check before travelling.

THE PLAZA STOCKPORT

Friday 30 March *Hello, My Name is Doris* (2015) [15] 11am
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest (1975) [15] 7:30pm
Thursday 5 April *The Greatest Showman* (2017) [PG] 11am & 7:30pm
Friday 13 April *Sir Alec Guinness Double* [U] Bill 11am & 7:30pm
The Lady Killers (1950) & *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949)
Friday 27 April *Howard's End* (1992) [PG] 11am & 7:30pm
Friday 4 May *Some Like it Hot* (1959) [12] 11am & 7:30pm
Friday 11 May *Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool* (2017) [15] 11am
The Silence of the Lambs (1991) [18] 7:30pm
Saturday 26 May *George Formby Double* [U] Bill at 2:30pm & 7:30pm
Let George do it and Turned Out Nice Again (1940) presented in 35mm.
 Behind the Scenes tours at 11am on Mondays 26 March, 30 April & 21 May, £7 – book or simply turn up.

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

THE FECKENODEON Worcestershire, B96 6HN

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

24 March *Death at a Funeral* (2007) [15]
28 April *Victoria & Abdul* (2017) [PG]

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

THE REGAL EXPERIENCE, WYMONDHAM

18 March Alfred Hitchcock's *Stage Fright* (1950) [A]
 + *Every Sunday* (an MGM musical featurette with Judy Garland)
8 April A charity show for the RAF Wings Appeal;
 celebrating 100 years of the RAF: *633 Squadron* (1964) [A]
 + *The New Men* a 1962 RAF recruitment training film
13 May Humphrey Bogart in *The African Queen* (1951) [U]
 + An Edgar Lustgarten crime short *The Last Train* (1960)

Shows on Sundays at 2:30pm at the Wymondham Ex-Service's Club (former Regal cinema) NR18 OAT [tinyurl.com/zddvkq4].

Further information from Michael Armstrong [01953 603246]

FILM STUDIES & THE EDINBURGH FILM FESTIVAL

This four-week course at Edinburgh University in June introduces students to central concepts of film study and includes exclusive access to the Edinburgh International Film Festival. Full details at [www.summerschool.ed.ac.uk/course/filmstudies]. Application deadline 30 March

WURLITZER ORGAN CONCERT

at the Troxy 490 Commercial Road, London, E1 OHX
 Tuesday 17 April at 7:00pm – David Lowe and Declan Poole
 Information: [www.cinema-organs.org.uk]

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PUBLICATIONS

Back Numbers Available

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.

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 Cinemas; 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 50 th Anniversary; Plaza Stockport; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Majestic Leeds; Pascal J Stienlet.
No 42	£6.00	Odeon Elephant & Castle, Plaza Crosby; Depot Lewes; Cineworld Chelsea; Gaumont Sheffield Figures.

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 9	Preservation Matters; Ritz Seaford; County Cinemas; Archive report.
No 10	Montagu Pyke; Regent , Brighton; Preservation Matters; Theatre Organs.
No 14/15	Double Issue : Julian Leathart; Orion Burgess Hill; Our Cinema Heritage; Leeds in the 1950s
No 16	Where space matters; Circuit releases of 1952; Leeds in the 50s/60s; 3,000 plus.
No 20	Academy London; Electric Portobello Road; Everyman Hampstead; John D Sharp photographs; Gaiety Birmingham; Listing the Regal Wells.
No 22	Palace Theatre London; Alone in the Dark; David Nye. Burrell, Foley, Fischer.
No 23	Mollo & Egan; A Gaumont Miscellany; Associated GP Cinemas; New Cinema Design; New Victoria London.
No 24	Oldest Cinema (Harringay); Holloway Gaumont; Odeon Miscellany; Cardiff Round-Up; Preservation Matters.

BULLETINS

We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 2016 are £4.00 per year (6 issues); individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2017 and 2018 are £4.00 per copy. All prices include postage. There are some issues available from earlier years, 1967 to 1986 – please send enquiries to the Sales Officer.

AND WHERE TO KEEP THOSE PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINES?

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

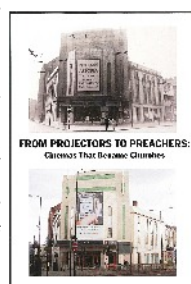
New Publications

From Projectors to Preachers

Cinemas that became Churches by Gavin McGrath.

32 pages, A4 card covers, illustrated. £4.50 plus postage.

After covering pubs and supermarkets, the author turns his attention to churches, of which there are a great number. Over 110 former cinemas are featured here, arranged alphabetically from Abergavenny to Woolwich. There are details of the buildings' history, film presentations, architect and subsequent use after cinema closure and most are illustrated in colour. Appendices cover Proposed Churches, In Memoriam and a brief history of the religious organisations that operate the former cinemas.



Still available by the same author:

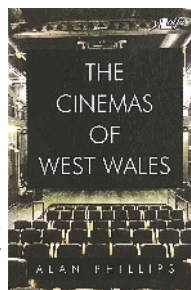
From Celluloid to Cereal – Cinemas that became Supermarkets: £4.00
The Cinemas and Theatres of Tower Hamlets: £6.99. Both plus postage.

The Cinemas of West Wales

by Alan Phillips. 130 pages, A5 paperback, illustrated.

£6.99 plus postage.

This book covers the history of cinemas on the West Wales coast, from Barmouth in Gwynedd to Llanelli in Carmarthenshire, as well as inland towns. Amongst the larger towns featured are Aberystwyth, Cardigan, Carmarthen and Tenby. There are a good number of illustrations and, although many of the buildings described have been demolished, there are several success stories too, including Cross Hands Public Hall, Theatr Gwaun at Fishguard and the Picture House / Neuadd Dyffi in Aberdovey, to name just three.



After The Final Curtain

The Fall of the American Movie Theater by Matt Lambros

208 pages, hardback landscape, fully illustrated in colour

£29.99 plus postage.

Matt Lambros travelled especially from the USA to speak to the CTA in February and, if you missed this event, copies of his book are still available. There are around 200 stunning colour photographs of American Movie Places that have fallen on hard times, waiting for someone to come along and rescue them!



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.

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

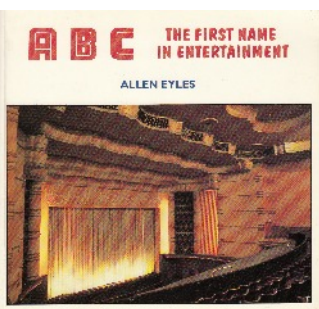
ABC: The First Name in Entertainment and Gaumont British Cinemas.

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! *

HOLIDAY SNAPS

CINEMAS OF THE AUVERGNE (France)

Top to bottom: Le Paris, Brioude; Le Monaco, Thiers; Le Foyer Besse; Six-screen Ciné Dyke, Le Puy en Velay.

Photos taken June 2017

Sent in by Anthony Wills



CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

Listed Grade II*

Planning and Listed Building Consent applications have been submitted relating to the proposed conversion of the **State** in Grays to a hostelry in the Wetherspoon chain of such establishments. These plans, largely similar to the pre-applications, are supported in general by the CTA, with some reservations, in order to assure a secure future for the cinema. Photographs recently taken from an unmanned aerial vehicle demonstrate that the roof of the building is currently in a parlous state of repair. {1837}

Detailed plans for refurbishment of the **Granada** at Walthamstow as a performing arts centre have now been prepared. Despite inculcating predictable unease about certain aspects of the scheme, these proposals appear to be largely sympathetic to the historic fabric of the venue. Various concerns are to be raised with the appointed architectural partnership, including advocacy of provision for restoration of the organ conjointly with its long-disused pit console and preservation of the surviving stage lighting control. {9397}

At the **Dreamland Cinema** in Margate, removal is proposed of the temporary structures introduced for bingo, of the safety curtain installed in the nineteen seventies and of the bingo seating, which latter will require listed building consent. Plasterwork is to be restored and a more sympathetic colour scheme introduced. It is to be hoped that the auditorium may have its latter day partitioning removed and that access to the organ chambers may be upgraded in compliance with current safety standards in order to permit restoration of the instrument. {15123}

Listed Grade II



The **Picture House** in Chesterfield [above], operated for many years as the **Winding Wheel Theatre**, is to receive an upgrade funded by its local Council with an aim of securing subsidy-free operation by two thousand and twenty-one. An architectural practice is currently preparing a design, which may have an adverse impact upon the foyer areas, although the conservation officer responsible has asserted that an emphasis upon the import of heritage features will be maintained. {22413}

The **Grand** in Westbourne closed in January and has been sold to a development company, following approaches to various cinema operators, which failed to evoke interest in returning the building to film exhibition. {22430}

The **Dominion** in Acton [R] has been purchased by Arch Climbing Wall, a company specialising in centres catering for the aforesaid activity. Unfortunately, the operator commenced unauthorised work on the building, the cessation of which was compelled by Ealing Council's Conservation Officer. {13831}



The Gaumont Palace Taunton in August 2003

The **Gaumont Palace** at Taunton is currently marketed at a price of almost two million pounds. This is an extremely impressive cinema, both internally and externally, by WT Benslyn. {13953}

A planning condition relating to the recent renovation work at the **Odeon** in York required the restoration of the foyer murals. Sadly, it is stated that upon removal of wallpaper, which covered the area of interest, no trace of the murals remained. The colour palette introduced into the project, based upon a grey tone, is markedly prosaic. {2788}

The **Ritz** at Nuneaton is now offered for sale as a dance studio. {25909}

Unlisted

Despite officer recommendation for acceptance of the redevelopment scheme that encompasses the **Coronet** in London's Elephant and Castle district, Southwark Council's Planning Committee rejected it; its further consideration has now been twice deferred. Delancey, the developer, is preparing revisions to its proposal. {27019}

It transpires that the Crown Estate wishes to redevelop the **Carlton** in London's Haymarket, in so doing demolishing all except the façade. Representations are to be made to Westminster City Council by the Association; it is also hoped that Save Britain's Heritage may involve itself in the case. {1838}

The **Odeon** in South Woodford has been offered for sale; however, an assurance has been given that a change of ownership will not affect the cinema's operation. {13743}

The **Royal** in Plymouth recently closed as a consequence of severe water penetration during a heavy rainstorm. Despite the survival of many architectural features of the distinguished auditorium by William Glen, this is one of a number of notable cinemas for which Historic England has recently refused listed status. {24749}

Following authorisation by Scarborough Council to demolish the **Futurist**, a submission was made by The Theatres Trust that the case for its retention be called in for determination by the Secretary of State; this request has been refused. {1842}

THE ODEON TEMPLE FORTUNE

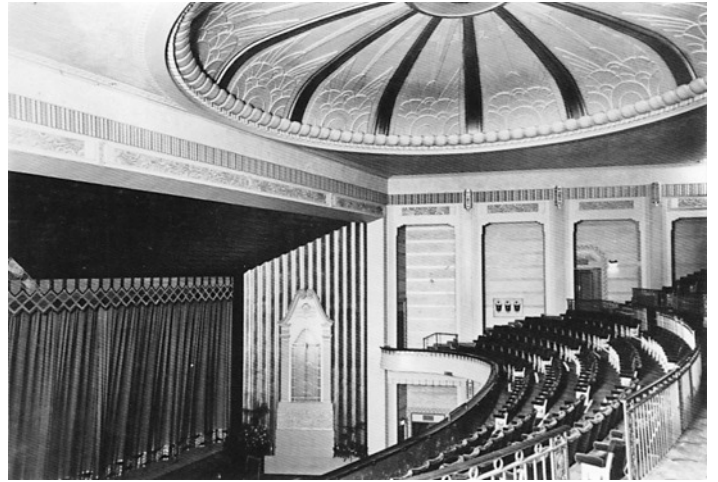
By Wilf Watters

The recent showing of my film of the Odeon Temple Fortune, near Golders Green in North London, on *Talking Pictures* brought back many memories of when I started to notice that cinemas were closing down. A friend, Mike Lewis, told me that the Odeon (opened as the Orpheum) was about to stage its last show, a pantomime and, after a few weeks of films, would close down and be demolished. He worked part-time as the electrician so I could come back stage to get some shots. This I did using my clockwork 16mm camera and using a cassette recorder for the sound. An assistant apprentice, John, also appeared. Barbara Windsor and Ed 'Stewpot' Stewart were in the cast; this all took place in 1973. Films continued for several years however.

Eventually Mike informed me that the cinema would close after the film *Digby, the Biggest Dog in the World* with Jim Dale and Spike Milligan. So back I went and filmed the last night and, after a couple of years, the demolition finally happened. So I spent quite some time filming this – it was a big cinema and the huge car park with it made the whole site very valuable indeed. The CTA visited it back in November 1971 and I am grateful to Rachel Marks for finding the visit notes and some pictures. They stated that the cinema opened in October 1930. It did have an organ – a Compton – and the opening show included Charles Allen's 25 dancing girls. The projection box was reached by crossing the huge flat roof and had projectors that were set at extreme angles. The proscenium width was 35ft and the stage was 40ft deep, with 13 dressing rooms.

Some people thought the outside was rather crude, with two bulky towers dominating the front elevation; a far cry from the new Odeons then being built around the country. It took so long being demolished that John the apprentice had now become an adult stage hand working in London's theatres. He was asked to come along to see the great cinema being knocked down and was filmed on the remains of the stage looking at the scribbled names of previous shows still on the wall. I am glad that the TV people didn't cut anything or insert any adverts! It's good that the cinema film was shown recently. It brings to the attention that these fine old buildings are still in danger of disappearing.

B/W photos from the CTA archive; colour frames from 16mm film [26429]



MEMORIES OF THE LONDON PALLADIUM – PART 2

By Ron Knee

First I must apologise for the long wait of two years, Part 1 was printed in Bulletin 50/2 [Mar/Apr 2016]. My article on my time at the Gaumont/Odeon Hammersmith has been delayed, the reason being that many members contacted me regarding *Palladium Part 1* so I have decided to write Part 2. The Gaumont Hammersmith Memories will appear in the March/April 2019 Bulletin, just before Brexit! So make a note in your diaries and I hope most of you have retained Part 1 as the names of people, staff and some photographs will be mentioned in this Part 2, especially the photos that I have recently discovered.



A Palladium programme dated 1930

As mentioned in Part 1 many stories are related to staff but I also had many experiences and fun with the various stars and other performers who appeared in the stage productions and pantomime seasons. I found more photographs of my time there whilst searching for something else recently, these were originally used for a magazine article in 1968.

SOUND

Les, who was in charge of sound, used to change the radio mic batteries at the beginning of each performance and sometimes during the interval, if the artist appeared in both acts. In those days radio mics were still in their infancy, always breaking up or crackling and a spare was always kept in the prompt corner for an emergency change over by Eddie. As I was the youngest of the tech team, I was constantly being sent by tube to Islington, to a workshop where they repaired these receiver packs for the radio mics. There were three of us working in the control rooms because of days off, chief electrician, Bill, would take over the lighting console and I would move over to the sound desk when Les was off in the adjoining room. The new sound and lighting rooms were built at the same time and had adjoining rooms.

When on sound I would go to the stars' dressing rooms issuing the radio mics or changing their batteries. During these visits you would have a quick chat, mostly about the show. Dusty Springfield was very funny with her jokes and impressions. She was always asking me

about the sound and wanted everything as perfect as possible, going to great lengths to attain this. I remember once when she was on a *Sunday Night at the Palladium*, there was a big row during rehearsal with the conductor on the Sunday morning and she refused to go on that night unless Jack Parnell was there. Jack Parnell normally conducted his Orchestra for the *ATV Sunday at the Palladium* but for some reason he was at the ABC Theatre Blackpool, where at that time ATV produced their summer shows. Dusty said that her contract had Jack Parnell as conductor and was adamant she wanted no one else. By 2pm Jack had been flown to London from Blackpool, that evening Jack Parnell conducted for Dusty. I was pleased that I normally did lighting, poor Les he was always on the receiving end. Nearly everyone moaned about the sound not being loud enough; the cause then was the dreadful feedback – however, most were understanding. Ken Dodd never used a radio mic; he always used the risers as they were known, a microphone that appeared through the floor from the front of the stage and even he wanted to hear feedback before he knew he had the top volume you could get! Whoever was on sound would turn it up until you got feedback then turned it down to the set level, that way he knew he was getting the best attainable volume

Watching the microphones rise from the stage looked very professional, though it was very simple piece of mechanism. It was a basic two-sided steel frame built into the stage floor with the mic set onto a rod that the cable ran through to a little platform at the base onto which the stand was attached. A linked chain fixed to a motor and cog at the base on the right side winched up the platform; the two small flaps that opened and closed either side just before the mic appeared or disappeared were operated from the left side frame with two metal arms. When the mic plinth reached a certain height, it hit one of two cogs that operated them. It was an ingenious Meccano device. There were five risers, a centre and two either side. The controls that operated the mic risers were in the sound room and the levels were set at rehearsals – the sliders could be set at various numbers like 4 or 6¼. If you just used the centre it was easy to pre-set but if you were using all five that was a different matter, you might have another act using the centre mic at a lower height from the previous setting, so you pre-set that with the other four, at blackout you did the changeover. The most important thing was to remember to fade the sound out or you would get the sound of the motors over the speakers as the mics came up.



The author at the Palladium sound console

If you look at the photograph of me at the sound console [bottom previous page] my right hand is on the riser mics control unit; you can see the five sliders, which could be pre-set. Below, out of view, were six switches, five white and one red. After selecting all the heights on the faders of the mics you were going to use you would push down each white switch beneath then push down the red master switch to operate, not forgetting to fade all the sound out; my left hand is on the panel that controlled the sound on all mics separately. The amazing thing is when I look back at this photograph I am surprised that I ever got it right, one mistake was all that it needed!

The 20 white switches running along the front of the desk were radio mic channels with 20 faders above, which could be set to various levels for sound, the rows of knobs above were for treble, bass and echo chamber (see below) These 20 switches had three positions; centre was off, down was on and if you wished to hear if the mic was working correctly before the artist appeared on stage you could push and hold the switch up to listen on a separate isolated speaker in the control room, just behind my head (note my glass of orange squash on top) – if you had a problem, it was ring Eddie. Needless to say you could hear anyone's conversations from the side of the stage into their dressing room!!!

The echo chamber was used a great deal, in summer shows as well as pantomime, this was another Meccano brainwave. Les showed me this large tank in an old disused cob-webbed room that had not been in use for years. The tank had previously been used in the war for water storage. It was about 15ft x 10ft x 5ft high and had those large rivets to hold it together. When you lifted the top circular lid and looked inside this rusty tank, in the centre was a piece of wood wedged across with a wired mic dangling from it; this was the echo chamber! When I gave the side of the tank a bang with my hand, the reverberation was amazing. Joe Ashby was head of sound for the **Palladium** and all Moss Empire Theatres; he alone had created this very effective piece of equipment. Briefly, the echo effect was achieved by speaking into a microphone or radio mic on stage that fed through the mixer in the console to a small speaker fixed in the tank, which was picked up by the dangling mic and then fed back via the sound console into the auditorium speakers, ingenious – and so effective.



Joe Ashby at the old sound console

As I conclude this section of my experience with the sound systems I must mention Joe Ashby. Joe had worked for Moss Empires all his life and when I met him he must have been in his sixties. He knew everyone connected to show business throughout the Moss Empire circuit. He was always at the **Palladium** for any opening of a new production and if there was a problem at any other of the circuit's theatres, he would visit to look into their concerns. He was of the old school and always wore a suit and tie, very gentle and very

kind. I think this presence gave him extra protection from the directors or performers who were always complaining and ranting about the sound not being loud enough. When he went to meet the person complaining and spoke in his soft voice, they just dried and completely changed their attitude and accepted the reason he gave and thanked him.

I was working on the rehearsals of *Robinson Crusoe* on Christmas Eve 1967 with Engelbert Humperdinck [R]. All day there were problems with Engelbert's radio mic, because his voice was soft when he sang – there was just no volume to carry over the orchestra in the pit. His dialogue was fine but as soon as the orchestra started, problems. By 7pm that evening all the cast and crew went home. Les lived in Lewes, Sussex and no solution had been found to increase the sound volume. Joe said he wanted to work all night to try and fix the problem. As I lived just up the road at Notting Hill, I volunteered to Keith that I would stay if they arranged for a taxi. Keith said yes and he and Les left for Christmas, leaving Joe, me and the fireman locked in this large empty building.



This is a larger photo of me at the lighting console (see part 1). It shows the Bakelite three-way talk back system. The black line at the top right is the entrance to the relay room, which fed the power modules housed under the stage. Just visible in the top left corner is the control panel from which one dimmer controlled all the house lights within the auditorium, next to this were five rows of push switches that controlled specials, such as UV lights and any other lighting effects which had to remain on without being dimmed, UV lighting normally took about 4 minutes to warm up; below this is the one way stage viewing window. On the console base you can see one Bakelite button set in the sloping floor.

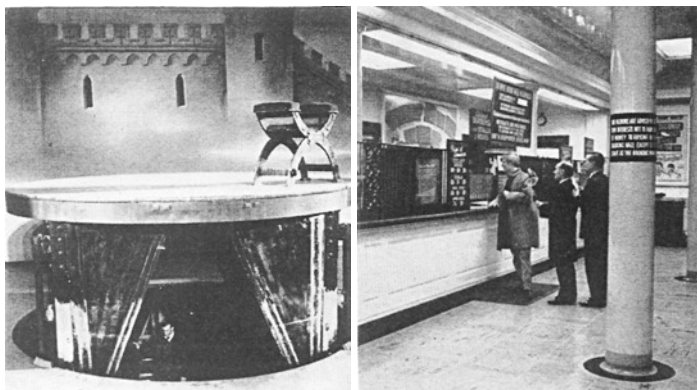
There were six of these that had various functions; these floor buttons were originally used on the previous old lighting console, which gave the impression of a Compton Organ. (See picture [R].) The button you see by my right foot controlled all the auto colour changer motors that you had pre-selected from the panel's 15 white buttons above my right hand.



The old lighting console



Joe put on a radio mic, I sat at the sound console and the fireman went to watch television in his room. Joe worked for hours trying many various experiments all to no avail. I rang the house telephone at 2am on Christmas Day. The fireman let us out through the stage door to a waiting taxi. Joe said he would drop me off first but I said no, you first. He looked so pale and stressed over this problem; the theatre was very cold for the seven hours we worked through the night. It was 3am when we reached Streatham, South London, where Joe lived. He walked slowly from the taxi up the front path. I arrived home an hour later, went to bed and awoke at 3:30pm on Christmas Day.



[L] The centre stage lift at a height of 7ft
[R] A section of the Palladium Box Office

The next day call was 12 noon on Boxing Day and Les informed me that Joe had telephoned Albert Knight the director that the only solution was to use a roving cable microphone, which Engelbert did for ten minutes at every performance before the pantomime finale, which was most successful. Sadly Joe was not so fortunate – he succumbed to pneumonia caused by the cold late night we both worked. He was ill for many months and never fully recovered. I never saw him again.

I was back in the hot seat of the lighting console for *Robinson Crusoe*, which ran to packed houses and was standing room only until Easter.

During this run Brian, one of the showmen, asked me if I was interested in a two-week job at Churchill's Night Club, operating the lighting for their two shows a night. The club was ten minutes' walk away and they wanted someone to work from 11:15pm to 2:30am. He said you get £20 cash for six nights. I said I would think about it. It would mean I would have to drive my car to work at the **Palladium**. I normally caught the tube from Notting Hill Gate to Oxford Circus. Les said you can park in Regents Park, where it's free parking, then between the matinée and evening performance move it to a street at the back of the **Palladium**. I told Brian I would do it for two weeks. Everything was going well, the evening performance finished, I left after switch down around 10:40pm. I found my car and drove to Churchill's Club, arrived, saw the chef and ordered the same meal every night, fillet steak and chips. Unused bottles of free champagne lined the staff room like bottles of water. The hostesses earned their commission by selling as many bottles of champagne as possible, even I got fed up with it after a week!

At the end of two weeks the stage manager paid me and said would I do one more week, as he was taking a week off when Brian came back from holiday on Monday. I said yes. In 1968 my take-home pay was £78 from the **Palladium** for six days, including Sunday TV and £20 from Churchill's. This was when then the average weekly pay was £30.

Brian came back from holiday, he was working nights at the **Palladium**, then Churchill's. At the end of the third week Brian said Lou, the Stage Manager, was ill so could I continue until he returned. I said yes.

The following week, during *Robinson Crusoe*, there was a scene on a shipwrecked Island, which lasted 20 minutes without any lighting changes. Arthur Askey had a line "It's getting dark" that was my cue to start a minute fade-down. Suddenly I felt this dig in my back and it was Les who said, "Wake up, you've missed a cue." I did the fade in seconds. I was in complete shock after that. Les was saying, talk back and on report etc. Miracles of miracles, the talk back stayed silent.

I arrived at Churchill's that night and told Brian I was leaving on Saturday. He tried to persuade me to stay one more week, I said no way. I saw Les the next day at the get-in for *Sunday at the Palladium* show, I told him I had left and he said I don't know how you did it. I said nor do I, all those weeks 9am to 3am even I could not manage 18 hours a day for weeks. I did miss the fillet steak, though I do not eat meat now.

Robinson Crusoe finished its successful run at Easter. This was followed by *Tom Jones Variety Season* from 25 April, twice nightly until June. Then Sammy Davis Jr in *Golden Boy*, the first stage show presented at the **Palladium**. There were problems with the early performances, Robert Kennedy was assassinated on opening night, 5 June 1968. Various performances were cancelled over several weeks; audiences had purchased tickets to see Sammy Davis Jr, not the understudy. The show closed on 14 September. From 19 September Cliff Richard in the *Autumn Show* ran until 7 December; on 17 December Jimmy Tarbuck opened in the pantomime *Jack and the Beanstalk*.

PALLADIUM PROMPT CORNER



This photo shows the very busy prompt corner in the 1960s with the Tiller Girls running off stage after their popular pony dance routine.

Extreme left leaning slightly back is the stage director Jack Matthews (see Part 1). Just below the clock is a large brass cage; this opened to allow a valve lever to operate the fire safety curtain. This safety curtain had a picture painted onto the front depicting a scene of **Hengler's Circus**, which had previously stood on the site before the **Palladium** was built. There was also another valve lever to the right of the cage, below George's arm (reaching up to operate a switch box). This other lever operated the iconic red velvet and gold front-of-house curtains, long gone. These swag curtains, which weighed over a ton, could sweep out of sight within seconds, or slowly descend. Both of these valve levers operated a pressurised water system, which was supplied by a private company via a secure ring main that encircled the West End. Several other theatres used this water system as did offices and department stores for their fire hydrants and sprinkler systems.

I operated the house tabs several times under George's watchful eye. There was quite a knack to this; as you lifted the lever to allow the water pressure in there was a hiss as the curtains rose, after they reached the limit you locked the valve lever off in the up position; to lower you put the lever in reverse and allowed the water out – depending on how quickly you allowed the water out controlled the speed of their descent.

George also controlled the revolving stage. This switch control was a few feet to the left of the cage and mounted onto the stage floor; it was similar to those used to operate electric trams. George had been deputy stage manager for years and was the only person who could operate the revolve spot on. When he was off, Albert, a senior stage hand, took on this job but he always missed the stop mark on the stage.

As previously mentioned, the inner section of the revolve was a platform lift, which had to be unbolted from the outer revolve section beneath the stage. If this was used the artists would stand on it at stage level and were then lowered; at the right cue the lift would raise to whatever height that had been pre-set. As all the operations were from below stage, George would talk the cues through an intercom to those operating the controls beneath.

The photo also shows the backstage staff, all of whom had to wear a uniform with collar and tie. All heads of departments wore suits and everyone had to clock in and out, obtaining your card from the stage door man. This was strictly enforced by the stage director.

In 1980 when walking up the Avenue in Southampton to collect my car, at a bus stop I saw a lone person waiting. It was George. At first he didn't recognise me until I spoke to him. He explained he had recently retired and how he missed it all after thirty years. It was hard for me to react so I said, "I think you saw the best, George" and he replied, "Young Ron, I think you're right." I hate to say this now but I was pleased the bus came along and I watched him get on...

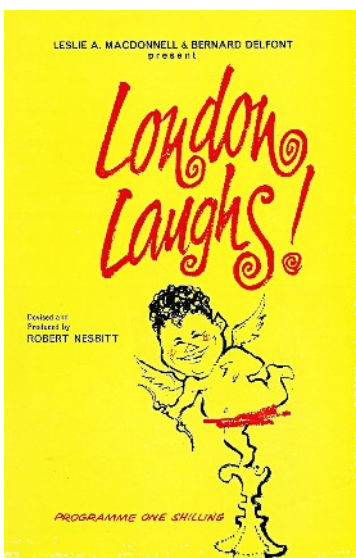
My happy memories from the **Palladium** were some of the best I have had in my career. I have never been back since I left at the end of September 1968. Memories locked forever.



Jack Matthews [see part 1] in the prompt corner

ROBERT NESBITT

London Laughs 1966 was the last full production by Robert Nesbitt at the Palladium. His shows "devised and produced by Robert Nesbitt" were supported for many years by Tod Kingman and Robert St John Roper designing his spectacular scenery and costumes. I remember during the 1966 rehearsals, during the setting of one scene when a backdrop was lowered, he commented through his microphone to Tod Kingman that this must be the worst backdrop he had painted. "Do not worry Tod, I will light it and it will look fine". He used to sit at a large table sited in the centre of the stalls during rehearsals, with a microphone and assistant who would bring him chicken sandwiches in white bread minus the crusts and champagne on ice.



He provided many extra stage facilities at the Palladium, like the famous revolving stage and centre lift, long gone, that rose to the height of 10ft and the huge silver and mirrored 'Starlite' staircase, which was flown at the very back of the stage on a special silent motorised winch; when lowered it took some 12 minutes and as it approached the stage it required 10 stage hands to line along the back and push it forward on a series of concealed wheels, then the whole staircase gradually opened up like a Venetian blind, covering half of the stage plus the entire width. It was used for many finales and twice when the Bluebell Girls appeared there in 1967.

After *London Laughs* Nesbitt still carried on staging spectaculars for Talk of the Town at the London Hippodrome, also built by Frank Matcham and continued directing the Royal Variety Performance at the Palladium for many years. Possibly the reason for him being retained was that all performers from around the world respected this great producer and director.

SHIP SHAPE AND BRISTOL FASHION

By David A Ellis

The Odeon Bristol, on the corner of Union Street and Broadmead, was designed by Thomas Cecil Howitt from Nottingham and built on part of the site of the old Fry's chocolate factory, opening its doors on 16 July 1938; some sources state June 1939. The plans had been approved in 1936 and Lord Apsley, who was the MP for Bristol Central at the time, opened it. Guests of the management filled the balcony and there were nearly a thousand guests, all dressed in evening attire. Also in attendance at the grand occasion was HM Royal Artillery (mounted) band.



The first attraction at the 1,990-seat cinema was Deanna Durbin and Herbert Marshall in *Mad about Music*, with a Mickey Mouse cartoon called *Donald's Better Self* and an interest film on the North Sea; the film ran to packed houses for two weeks. After the film guests enjoyed a champagne supper in the auditorium and dancing on the stage. First to dance were Mr and Mrs Oscar Deutsch. The theatre, which also housed a restaurant, was claimed to be one of the largest and most imposing Odeons in the west. A feature of the building was the great circular entrance tower, which was impressive at night when it was floodlit. Canopies were a feature of the exterior and the surrounds of the entrance corner were in a special black plate glass as a contrast to the biscuit tone of the facing material. The front entrance enclosed a circular vestibule walled in glass. There were two staircases, which lead to the upper foyer, which had a circular lounge. The auditorium was coloured in gold and blue. Decorations included grilles incorporating symbols of Bristol industries. There were giant stars across the roof and floodlit coves and pillars.

As usual Mrs Oscar Deutsch (Lilly) was responsible for the interior decoration. It is said that no two schemes were alike. Deutsch declared the cinema his finest. Described as a wonder cinema, it was built by John Knox (Bristol) Ltd. The first manager was a Mr Beadle [R], who was originally from Canada. Projection equipment would be the usual British Thomson-Houston (BTH) set up and, before digital, Cinemeccanica equipment. Seating and carpeting at the time of opening was green. In May 1946, a real-life drama unfolded when the cinema manager, a Mr Robert Parrington Jackson, aged thirty-three, was shot during the screening of *The Light that Failed*. Sadly, he later died in hospital. In 1989 a petty crook confessed to the crime on his deathbed. In February 1947, actress Margaret Lockwood did a tour of the provinces and stopped off to make a personal appearance at the cinema. In the 1950s many big movies were screened, including *South Pacific*. The theatre hosted a Royal première in 1953, with the screening of *Rob Roy*.



The cinema closed for conversion and in May 1974 the building reopened with three screens, two of them in the stalls area. Again the theatre was closed, this time on the 15 October 1983. The stalls area was converted into a Mothercare store and the cinema reopened in June 1985. There were now three screens, sideways in the old balcony area. The opening attraction was *A View to a Kill*, shown in all three.

THE ORCHESTRA THAT DRAWS NO SALARY

By Hector Hill

In the mid-1920s new types of gramophone became available. They had electric pickups, valve amplifiers, loudspeakers and electric motors. They were expensive, making them luxury domestic items; but they complemented the improved sound of the new 'electrical process' 78 rpm records launched in the US and UK in 1925. Manufacturers saw the commercial possibilities for gramophones fitted with two turntables, whereby an uninterrupted sequence of music could be played with a loudness and fidelity as yet not experienced by the wider public. On some machines the outputs from both turntables could be mixed, instead of merely being changed from one to the other. Microphones and radios could be included. Dance halls were obvious venues. So too were cinemas; and exhibitors had a wide choice.

The *Kinematograph Year Book 1928* listed Magnatone, Reprovox and Panatrope. The 1929 edition omitted Reprovox and added Celebritone, Electramonic, Ethatrope, Phantestra and Phonovox; but cautioned the 'wise exhibitor' about the 'considerable variation in the performances of the various machines'.

The Panatrope was developed in the US by General Electric and marketed there by the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Co. It debuted in September 1925 and for a while some were imported and sold through a London showroom. In the UK it was manufactured by British Thomson-Houston Co Ltd (majority-owned by GE) and marketed under licence by British Brunswick Ltd. It was launched at the *Café de Paris* on 4 October 1926. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York had each acquired one by January 1927. By May 1928 the range comprised: the 65 guineas Junior; the £80 De Luxe; the £135 Senior; the £175 Super [R] (for cinemas etc, available around April 1927); and the £200 Super with a public address unit. Supers had a motor-generator to raise the supply to 750 volts and were in 86 cinemas by October 1927 and 671 public venues by mid-1928. The *Queen's Hall* Dover installed one in May 1927 and featured it prominently in their advertising. British Brunswick produced sound effects records, adding to the range of sonic possibilities. There were free Panatrope public concerts; dealers hired machines out for social events and Panatrope became the generic term. An advert in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* on 13 June 1929 ran: "Cinema pianist wanted: one used to fitting with Panatrope or similar instrument".



The Magnatone [L] was cheaper. Launched around mid-1927 as 'The Instrument That Beats The Band', it was marketed by Glasgow-based Consulting & Radio Service Ltd in connection with Freed-Eisemann Radio of Great Britain Ltd, a subsidiary of the Freed-Eisemann Radio Corporation of New York. By January 1928 the *Olympia Brechin* was advertising theirs as the 'Wonderful Musical Instrument of the Age', adding 'The musical settings to the pictures are now of the Finest Works in this World'.

The Phantestra was made by the clumsily named 'Phantestra' (Renn's Gramophone & Wireless) Ltd of London, which

floated in December 1928. The company bought two others making piano actions and acoustic gramophones (one being Renn) and paid £48k for the patents and trademarks of Phantom Orchestra Ltd. It was a common ploy in the gramophone-boom to realise cash and transfer risk by floating a public company and selling it rights etc. The prospectus claimed the 'Phantestra Super Model' was already in cinemas, citing the '6,000 people' [sic] *Glasgow Playhouse* where it allegedly 'superseded other installations' and domestic models would soon be produced.



Electramonic Co Ltd, of Southwark and Celebritone Co Ltd, of Park Royal were floated in April and October 1928 respectively, with products ready to market. For prices from £36 to £175, Electramonic produced 'The Home Model' (a gramophone), 'The Combined Home Model' (a 'gramophone and wireless') and a large combined model for 'clubs, cinemas, ocean liners, dance halls, etc'. A gramophone was demonstrated in January 1928 at the *London Coliseum* where the pit orchestra accompanied vocal records. In February a battery-powered outdoor model entertained a

Highbury crowd of 58,505 at the Arsenal versus Aston Villa 5th Round FA Cup match (Arsenal won 4-1). Electramonic had acquired assets from the defunct Unique Wireless Co Ltd and planned also to develop a home-recorder and make gramophone records, for which a studio was built.

The Ethatrope [R] was manufactured by MPA Wireless Ltd of London. The domestic Ethatrope 'radio gramophone' was styled 'as good as an orchestra' and cost 135 guineas in November 1928. The two-turntable 'Radio Exchange' was 170 guineas in September 1929. It had British Thomson-Houston turntables and pickups and was reviewed favourably by *The Gramophone* in November 1929.



The Reprovox is elusive. It had two turntables and powered '60 loud speakers' at the *Yorkshire Evening Post's* Wireless Exhibition in November 1927. Omitted from the KYB, the three-turntable Musikon was sold by Will Day Ltd of Lisle Street, Leicester Square. Nottingham 'inventor', 'Mr C Marshall' launched the Sonotone in mid-1927. Installed mainly in Midlands venues, it 'augmented' musicians for silents and became the interval non-sync for talkies.

The Celebritone has no equal except—

A FIRST CLASS ORCHESTRA

STAR DANCE BAND

EFFECTS MACHINE

A £3,000 ORGAN

COMPLETE INSTALLATION! FROM £125 (or on Deferred Terms)

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WIRING: Cablegram, Telegram, London, FACTORY: Chislehurst, Waltham, Park Road, North Avenue, N.1. BRANCHES: BIRMINGHAM

COMPETITORS IT HAS NONE

Manufacturers enticed exhibitors with promises of world-leading music and musicians accompanying their silent films and, more importantly, of reduced wage bills. At its launch in October 1928, the Celebritone [L] was declared to be the equivalent of 'an orchestra of 100 players, a £3,000 organ and a vaudeville act'. *The Gramophone* praised its sound quality in May 1929. Celebritone's advert in the KYB 1929 shows wind-up handles for the turntables. There was a 'Junior Cinema' model at £125 and a 'Club' model 'with two moving-coil loudspeakers' at £175. The *Trafalgar* Portsmouth was an early adopter and from January 1929 advertised 'Full Programme and Celebritone Sound Machine in Support'.

In October 1929 *Boltons Cinema Kensington* advertised for a 'competent' relief pianist who could deputise on the Celebritone.

The Phonovox [R] was an electric pickup originating from the Pacent Radio Corporation of New York. The UK version went on sale in September 1927 priced 37/6 (49/6 with 'adapter' and 'volume control'). It was made by Igranic Electric Co Ltd of Bedford, who incorporated patented improvements and advertised it as 'The Orchestra That Draws No Salary'. In December 1927 *The Gramophone* judged it superior to the US version. It was designed to replace the sound-box on an acoustic gramophone tone-arm.



The orchestra that draws no salary



Notoriously, the 'Panatrope' at the Glen Kinema Paisley [above] indirectly caused the deaths of 70 children on 31 December 1929. In the winding room, an assistant rested a can of film against a 'Panatrope' accumulator awaiting recharging but not fully discharged. No fire reached the hall but smoke and fumes did, panicking the matinee audience who ran mainly to one exit. Deaths were due to asphyxia from fumes and suffocation and crushing in the stampede. There were allegations of a padlocked iron-trellis exit gate. Though undamaged, the cinema never reopened.

The *Leeds Mercury* of 10 August 1927 reported that 'panatropes' had been installed in six Bradford cinemas, three of which had each dispensed with musicians, except for a pianist to relieve the 'panatrope' operator. The local branch of the Musicians' Union declared themselves 'not seriously perturbed', asserting the 'panatrope' was merely a novelty that would wear itself out in a short time'. 'Canned music' was their disparaging term. Having auditioned a show, the reporter expressed reservations about classical works played over dramas but thought the popular dance tunes by Jack Hylton's Jazz Band and the Savoy Orpheans were good matches for 'racy comedies'. In the *Leeds Mercury* on 14 May, a reviewer reported on an odd experience at the Rialto when watching *A Romany Princess*, a German film based on the libretto to a Johann Strauss opera. Strauss's silent opera was accompanied by Verdi on the Panatrope.

Of course, films with synchronised sound on discs and optical tracks were already in the offing. In April 1929 it was reported that 200 cinemas had contracts for Western Electric's disc-and-optical equipment and 25 had been installed. Electramonic and Panatrope developed methods to synchronise their gramophones with projectors. British Brunswick manufactured sound-track records for British Photophone's disc-only system, which could work with existing Panatropes. However, with the supremacy of the optical system using equipment from Western Electric etc, the implosion of the stock market bubble in gramophone shares and the wider consequences of the Wall Street Crash, the writing was on the wall for these machines.

Electramonic Co Ltd went into liquidation in September 1929; its successor, Electramonic Co (1930) Ltd, founded in April 1932. The Panatrope was entangled in the collapse of British Brunswick Ltd in October 1929, bankrupting several cabinet makers; it later returned as a mainly domestic product. In April 1930 British Photophone Ltd and MPA Wireless Ltd went separately into liquidation. In January 1930 700,000 Phantestra 5/- shares were offered for 3/6. The *Birmingham Gazette* warned against buying because the price was obviously being 'puffed' on the Stock Exchange; the underwriters of the original December 1928 flotation had still not paid £63k and it was clearly an attempt to 'unload' shares onto the public. The *Rugby Advertiser* added that the shares 'push' was from the 'same quarter' that had 'pushed' six named shares in previous months, the price of each then fell from shillings to pence. The Stock Exchange Committee acted swiftly in January 1930 and a fraud trial resulted in December. The de-listed "Phantestra" (Renn's Gramophone & Wireless) Ltd went into liquidation in May 1930. Celebritone Ltd followed in September. Intriguingly, the KYB 1931 asterisked three cinemas as 'wired for Sound Pictures' with Celebritone systems. They were the Rivoli Brockley SE London, the Electric Palace Marble Arch and the Pictorium Swansea. None of the other makes were mentioned. Consulting & Radio Service Ltd went into liquidation in June 1931, the year that Freed-Eisemann Radio of Great Britain Ltd was struck off the Companies Register, the US parent having gone into receivership in November 1929. Igranic Electric Co Ltd continued with its core business in electrical engineering.

So much for the hardware. The University of Stirling houses the Musicians' Union's archive and has posted on Flickr several cartoons from the Union's quarterly *Journal*. Many from the late-1920s are about cinema musician redundancies due to the new sound technologies. They show the Union's hostility to the 'Panatrope'; its Canute-like stance on synchronised talkies; its support for the public's alleged adverse opinion of the technical and artistic qualities of the electrical systems; and its declared concern about the detriment to the English language from Americanisms on soundtracks. Three cartoons accompany this article. The full collection, with commentary, is on the Arts & Humanities Research Council website. Google 'Discordantnotes' and select the A&HRC link; or type: [www.ahrc.ac.uk/research/readwatchlisten/imagegallery/discordantnotes].



"NEXT, PLEASE!" [Oct 1928]



THE TURN OF THE TIDE. [Mar 1930]



Anguished Lady—
"Oh, what crimes are committed in my name."

[Oct 1930]

CINEMAS BY NIGHT

By Gavin McGrath

In this feature I'll take a look at a handful of our beloved buildings, often brightly lit up when we visit them but we don't normally see a picture of them. All are still operating as cinemas apart from the **Regal**, which until recently has mainly been in theatre use and the former Odeon in Blackpool, seen opposite as the *Funny Girls* showbar.



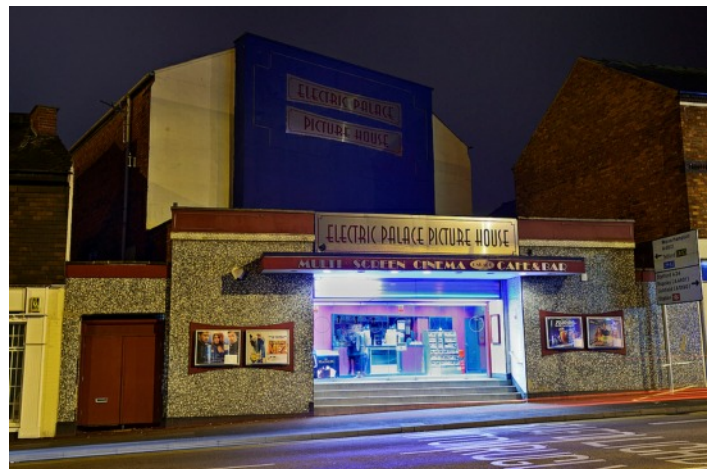
The Art Deco-style **Regal** in North Bridge Street, Bathgate opened in July 1938 and was designed by Andrew Haxton. It was divided in two during the 1970s with the cinema in the circle and the stalls going over to retail use. It was later acquired by the local authority, which closed it at the end of 1992 but another operator reopened it shortly after, closing it again in September 1993. It reopened as the **Regal Community Theatre** in 1995 providing an eclectic mix of theatre, music, comedy and children's events, with a film society hiring the space and showing films twice a month. In the summer of 2017 however, the charity running the venue went into voluntary liquidation, leaving the **Regal's** future in doubt. Reconnect Events staged *Snow White* over Christmas with a benefit held at **Cottiers Theatre** in Glasgow to raise funds for the theatre. Regal Radio, a community station for West Lothian, broadcasts from the theatre. The building was itself was given Grade C(s) status in 1999 and the entrance foyer still has the original terrazzo floor in place.



The **Strand Arts Centre** on Hollywood Road in Belfast is the only one of John McBride Neill's cinemas still in operation and the oldest cinema still in operation in Northern Ireland. It was built on the site of Strandtown House, home of a shipping magnate and opened as the **Strand** in December 1935. Originally a Union cinema, the company was taken over by ABC in 1937, although the cinema was not renamed. It closed in November 1983 but was reopened in 1984 by Ronnie Rutherford and used for live entertainment, with stars such as Little and Large and The Drifters appearing. This didn't last long however and films were again being screened following the creation of a four-screen cinema in 1988. The cinema had a restoration project carried out on it in 1999 and continues to survive, despite Northern Ireland being land of the multiplex. It ceased operating as a commercial cinema in 2013 and is now run as a not-for-profit charitable venture. Monthly heritage tours are available.



The massive Odeon on Dickson Road in Blackpool is unmistakable and was the largest of the original Odeons in the circuit, with a total of 3,088 seats. The Harry Weedon and W Calder Robson designed building opened in May 1939 and was tripled in October 1975, creating two small screens in the rear of the stalls. It closed in December 1998, having been replaced by a new multiplex on Rigby Road. Businessman Basil Newby has created an entertainment complex in the building with the *Funny Girls* showbar in the stalls from April 2002, Flamingo's nightclub in the former circle and Bar B, later Buzz, in the circle foyer. The Grade II listed building sometimes opens to the general public on Heritage weekends in September.



The **Cannock Cinema** on Walsall Road, Cannock opened as the **Picture Palace** in April 1914. It was designed by CW Joynson and was originally a single-floor cinema, although a balcony was added five years later. It was acquired from the McDonald family by Essoldo and fully modernised, reopening in September 1969 as the **Essoldo**. The Tigon Group took over the cinema in April 1972 and renamed it **Classic**, adding a second screen six years later using an adjacent building. The company was acquired by **Cannon** and it was renamed again in 1981. Peter Walker took over the cinema in April 1995 renaming it the **Picturedrome** with another operator, Mike Vickers, later taking charge and calling it the **Picture House**. It closed in February 2005 when plans were announced to replace it with a new development including a cinema. It was reopened however as the **Electric Palace Picture House** in February 2009 with local actor Ben Wilby making an appearance. A third screen was created but does not appear to have had much use over the years. It was revealed in March 2017 that the building had been sold, reputedly to manager Graham Cotton and that a £100,000 facelift would be taking place. This would include new seats and toilets, digital projection and the possibility of another screen in the balcony area. It is now known as the **Cannock Cinema**.





The Rio Cinema in Kingsland High Street in Dalston [London] opened in April 1915 as the Kingsland Empire with the original design by Adams & Coles. In the 1930s, when in the hands of Capital & Provincial News Theatres, the building was reconstructed to a design by FE Bromige and reopened in December 1937. It was then renamed the **Classic** and was also the Classic Cartoon Cinema and Classic Continental for a period in the mid-1950s. Another change of name to the **Tatler** in May 1970 brought [X]-certificate films until it was bought by a businessman in 1976, who named it the Rio. It was then managed by a co-operative and relaunched in 1982. In the mid-1990s the building underwent a much-needed facelift. In recent years the 430-seat community cinema has been struggling financially but is still going against all the odds. The basement was used for a promenade production of an immersive play in December 2015 and a pop-up bar was also created in the same space in the summer of 2016. It was then announced there were plans for a second screen using the basement and a fundraising campaign was started in order to raise the £150,000 necessary. This was achieved sooner than expected and the screen was open by December 2017. There is a possibility of a third screen by 2021. The building is Grade II listed.



The Phoenix on High Road in East Finchley [London] opened as the East Finchley Picturedrome in May 1912, a single-floor cinema with a barrel-vaulted ceiling. The screen was at the front end of the building behind the foyer. New owners renamed it the **Coliseum** and reopened it after a refurbishment in January 1926. It was renamed the Rex twelve years later, having been taken over and was given a further makeover, which included switching the screen to the other end. It reopened in September 1938 and over time had a series of operators before coming under the control of Contemporary Films in 1975. It was then renamed **Phoenix** and became an arthouse cinema, before being purchased by the Phoenix Trust in 1985. It went through restoration in 2010 to ensure its capability of serving the public for many years to come. Its patrons include Benedict Cumberbatch, Maureen Lipman and Mike Leigh. It was given a Grade II listing in 1999 and prominently appeared in the British comedy *Mr Love*.



The Ultimate Picture Palace in Jeune Street, Oxford first opened in February 1911 as the **Picture Palace** and was run by Frank Stuart, landlord of the Elm Tree Tavern next door. It closed in 1917, owing to the manager being called up for war duties and lay unused until being turned into a furniture warehouse. It was 'rediscovered' in the mid-1970s and reopened by Bill Heine and Pablo Butcher as the **Penultimate Picture Palace** in July 1976. It closed for a second time 18 years later, with debts estimated at £350,000 and was squatted by the Oxford Freedom Network, who screened free films during its occupation of the building. In 1996 the Marham brothers reopened the cinema as the **Ultimate Picture Palace** but it was taken over in 2009 by Jane Derricott and Philippa Farrow, who are remembered for installing the bar. Two years later it was bought by current owner Becky Hallsmith, whose tenure has seen the installation of new seats, new lighting and a general redecoration of the auditorium. The reopening in September 2013 included a performance by musician Roger Eno to the silent film *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. It currently has seating for 121 people and remains a unique addition to the cinema scene in Oxford.



The Odeon Luxe in Panton Street in the West End of London opened as the Cinecenta 1234 in January 1969. It was designed by Nigel Farrington for the Compton Group as a four-screen cinema from the outset and screened mainly independent and arthouse films. Over the years a series of operators ran the cinema including the Star group and Classic and, following the acquisition by Cannon, it became the **Cannon Panton Street**. It was later an **MGM** and an **ABC** but eventually ended up in the hands of **Odeon**. More recently it closed for refurbishment in October 2017, when reclining chairs were installed and it reopened under its current guise two months later. The screens are quite small with all having a capacity of less than 50 seats.

Photos courtesy of: James Deans, [www.JamesPDDeans.co.uk] (Regal); SJ Dunphy (Strand)**; Gavin McGrath (Odeon Blackpool and Odeon Luxe); Gary S Crutchley (Cannock Cinema); Rio Cinema (Rio)*; Basil Jadeh (Phoenix Cinema)* and Ian Wallman (Ultimate Picture Palace). ** Indicates image has been used under the Creative Commons Licence 2.0 and * under the Creative Commons Licence 3.0. See [creativecommons.org/licences].

REWINDING BACK

Sent in by David A Ellis

FROM CHOCOLATE BARS TO PRISON BARS

While the manager of the King's Cinema in London Road [Liverpool] was counting the evening's takings on Saturday night, a man entered the cinema and asked for a twopenny bar of chocolate. When the manager went for the chocolate, the man put his hand through the grille of the paybox and grabbed a bundle of notes. The man was chased through the City centre and eventually captured.

The Scotsman – 1 April 1935

ODEON THEATRE RECORDS



The Odeon Dudley in August 2004 {14956}

Odeon Theatres Ltd announce that two new cinemas will be opened on 26 July [1937] at South Norwood, London and at Crewe. Never before have two theatres been opened on the same day. The new Odeon Theatre at Dudley will be opened on 28 July. It is believed this will constitute a further record of three new theatres being opened in three days. In six weeks from 26 July, Odeon Theatres has no fewer than 14 new theatres scheduled for opening in various parts of the country, which easily is a record in cinema construction. There are 230 theatres in the Odeon circuit and this number will be increased to 300 in the course of the next few months.

CINEMAS AND ALERTS – SHOULD PATRONS REMAIN?

The question as to whether cinema patrons should be allowed to remain in the theatre when an alert is sounded was raised before the Liverpool County Licensing Justices yesterday. Mr AJ Dean, representing proprietors of cinemas in Great Crosby, Waterloo, Litherland and Seaforth applied for the renewal of cinema licences from 11am to 11pm. He said that although he applied for ordinary full hours, the existing gentlemen's agreement would be observed that the cinemas would continue to close at 9pm during the present emergency. Inspector Sissons said the police desired that the hours be fixed definitely from 11am to 9pm.

Mr Dean said cinema managers thought it better to allow people to remain in the cinemas than to turn them on to the streets during a raid. Managers would welcome a decision. If the police said people must be turned out at nine o'clock, even if there was a raid in progress, they would carry out this ruling. On the other hand, a Home Office suggestion was that it was better for people to remain in cinemas during a raid.

The licences were renewed from 11am to 11pm on the present understanding that cinemas' performances should finish at 9pm. Mr HA Scott Barrett, who presided, remarked that cinema managers should come to some arrangements with the police as the best course to adopt during an air raid. On application for renewal of music and dancing licenses for parochial halls, clubs and hotels, the chairman said the bench considered the same gentlemen's agreement should be observed as in the case of cinemas – namely that the closing hour should be 9pm. The bench decided that these dancing and other entertainments should close at 10pm.

Liverpool Daily Post – 11 January 1941

CINEMA RETURNS

Six summonses against cinema proprietors for failure to send returns to the Board of Trade in connection with the quota provisions of the Cinematograph Films Act 1938, came before Mr Frank Powell at Clerkenwell Police Court yesterday.

Appearing for the defence in one of the cases, Mr Norman Hart, solicitor to the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, pointed out that the returns in question were "most complicated" and that it was exceedingly difficult to get competent staff to do this sort of thing. Mr Daracott Seymour, for the Board of Trade, replied that of 4,700 licensed exhibitors, these were the only six defaulters.

The Harrison Theatre Co Ltd, of Lloyds Bank Buildings, Victoria Street, Liverpool, for whom Mr Hart appeared, pleaded guilty to failing to send in a return in respect of the Court Picture House theatre in New Brighton and were fined £20 with five guineas costs. Mr Seymour said they had rendered themselves liable to a penalty of £5 a day for 155 days and had caused the Board of Trade a lot of inconvenience. There was no previous conviction.

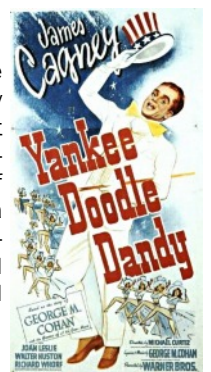
A South Wales proprietor was fined £10 and five guineas costs. In another case the summons was dismissed, two were adjourned and the sixth was not served.

Liverpool Daily Post – 29 June 1943

LOCAL TALENT COMPETITION

During the week beginning Monday 12 July, the film *Yankee Doodle Dandy* starring James Cagney will be shown. This is the story of the career of that great American showman, the late George M Cohan. In conjunction with this film, the manager of the Regal [Chester] will be running on stage a local talent competition. Competitors will be required to sing or to play any one of the musical numbers that are featured in the film. Entries will be received by the manager up to 10 July.

Chester Chronicle – 3 July 1943



REPERTORY CINEMA

In view of yesterday's letter advocating a repertory cinema for Liverpool, it is worth recalling that Liverpool did, in former years, boast such a cinema. It was the first repertory cinema in the provinces and a competition for its interior design was won by a Mr Lawrence Wright, then a fifth-year student in the Liverpool University School of Architecture.

The building was the Century Theatre at the bottom of Mount Pleasant, in more recent years a billiard hall. It was run in close association with the Shaftesbury Avenue Pavilion in London and the manager, Mr Charles E Brown, presented for three years a succession of admirable films from all over Europe. But popular backing was not sufficient to make the experiment pay and finally it had to close.

Liverpool Daily Post – 1 December 1943

SCALA CINEMA CLOSING TOMORROW

The directors of the Stratford-upon-Avon Picture House Company Ltd announce that the Scala Cinema, Bedford Street, Leamington Spa, will close tomorrow (Saturday). It is the town's smallest and oldest cinema. Its closing emphasises the many difficulties that beset the operator of the small cinema during these days of high costs.

The Scala seats only 400 and during the very steep increase in overloads [sic] during the last few years has eventually made the cinema an uneconomic proposition. The small amount of money that can be taken in this type of cinema is very rapidly swallowed up by the first deduction of approximately 40% in entertainment tax, with further deductions to the Sunday Charity Levy and the Eady Levy to subsidise British productions.

A statement issued by the directors says, "The cost of maintaining an old building of this type is absolutely prohibitive and the board was finally faced with complete redecoration and rewiring in order to obtain the renewal of the licence. The cost of this work, added to the normal day-to-day maintenance, made it quite obvious that such expenditure could not be warranted and, very reluctantly, the decision was made to close the house." {37740}

Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser – 27 June 1952

NEWSREEL

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

ALTRINCHAM (Greater Manchester)

Everyman is preparing to lodge a planning application for a four-screen cinema on George Street. The premises were previously occupied by JJB Sports.

North West Place – 29 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth

ASHBOURNE (Derbys)

The Elite opened in 1930 with 550 seats and films ceased in 1976. It was converted into a shopping arcade downstairs and a nightclub upstairs. The nightclub closed a few years ago and now the building's owner has applied for permission to turn the area into a community hall for use as a wedding venue, ballroom, a performance space and possible even small cinema screenings.

Derby Telegraph – 24 January; sent in by Peter Good; photo on front cover

AYR

A new seven-screen cinema could be part of the redeveloped Kyle Centre. It is understood that Odeon is being courted for a move from their current four-screen operation at Burns Statue Square.

Ayrshire Post – 31 January, 7 February

BANBURY (Oxon)

The Council has taken over the Castle Quay shopping centre after the current owner pulled out of a major development. The project will now happen – it includes a multi-screen Light cinema.

Oxfordshire Guardian – 21 December

BIRMINGHAM (Central)

Work started last September on a new Legoland at the Birmingham Arena. It will include a 4D cinema and is due to open this summer.

Birmingham Post – 28 December

The Old Rep has started theatre tours. Forthcoming dates are Saturday 19 May at 2pm and Saturday 7 July at 1pm and 3pm. Tickets are £8.

Sent in by Gary Stevens

BIRMINGHAM (Kings Heath)



The former Kingsway is to be demolished, apart from the locally-listed façade, which will be incorporated in the new development. It opened in March 1925 and was taken over by Essoldo towards the end of its life; films ceased in May 1980. It became a bingo hall, which closed in 2007. Four years later, a fire largely destroyed the building.

Birmingham Post – 18 January; photo taken August 2004

BISHOP AUCKLAND (Durham)

The former Kings closed in 1960 and became a supermarket. The auditorium and ballroom were later demolished but the frontage survives. Now an exploration by the most recent leaseholder reveals some upstairs rooms, including a wood-panelled lounge and the projection room. A paranormal investigator claims to have spoken recently to the ghost of Stan Laurel here. {26541}

Northern Echo – 9 January; sent in by Gavin McGrath

BLACKBURN (Lancs)

A planning application has been submitted for an eight-screen cinema on the site of the former Waves Water Fun Centre; it will be operated by Reel. Subject to approval, construction should start late spring and opening is planned for the end of 2019.

Lancashire Telegraph – 19 January

BLUEWATER (Kent)

On p21 of the last Bulletin we carried a report of the reopening of the Showcase de Lux, which has added four more screens. To prove the new seats had a luxurious amount of legroom, they invited Britain's tallest man to sit in them. Paul Sturgess is 7ft 7in [2.31m] tall. {24663}

News Shopper – 17 January; sent in by John Kennet

BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)

Work is progressing to add a fourth screen to the Picturedrome. It will have 110 seats and should be open for the school summer holidays but not April, as previously announced. {14782}

Bognor Regis Post – 2 February; sent in by Mike Whitcombe

BOURNEMOUTH

Bingo finished at the grade II listed Grand in Westbourne on 21 January. It opened in December 1922 and films ceased in October 1977. It is unlikely that films will return to the venue and it could be converted into a Wetherspoons; the building is virtually intact. See p34 Bulletin 51/6 and p6 Bulletin 51/5. {22430}

Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 13, 23, 29 January; sent in by John R Forster, Sally McGrath & Philip Stevens

BRADFORD (West Yorks)

A 20-seat screen for private hire is to be added to the six-screen 780-seat Light cinema currently under construction in the extension to the Broadway Shopping Centre. Opening is scheduled for this spring.

Telegraph & Argus, Bradford – 15 December

BRIGHTON

Hoardings have gone up around the grade II listed former Astoria, which is expected to be demolished imminently. It opened in December 1933 and films ceased in May 1977. It was a bingo hall until about 1996, since when it has been largely unused. An apartment block will be built on the site. {1844}

The Argus, Brighton – 9 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

The Cineworld at Brighton Marina held an autism-friendly screening of the new Star Wars on 7 January. The volume was turned down, the lights were left on low and there were no trailers. {24248}

The Argus, Brighton – 6 January; sent in by Barry Quinton

BRUSSELS (Belgium)

The oldest cinema in Brussels, the Pathé Palace reopened as a three-screen cinema on 28 February following a major renovation. The building opened in 1913 and was converted into a 2,500-seat cinema after WWI. It closed in the late 1970s and reopened in 1999 but that didn't last long. Renovation work started in April 2013. {22251}

Brussels Times – 22 January

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

BRYNMAWR (Blaenau Gwent)

The trustees of the Market Hall Cinema say they are still waiting for the Community Asset Transfer of the building from the Council after 4½ years. The delay prevents them applying for crucial funding. They say that the transfer of other Council-owned buildings across Blaenau Gwent has been completed within twelve weeks. {26576}

Western Mail, Cardiff – 3 February; Gwent Gazette – 8 February

BURY ST EDMUNDS (Suffolk)

The Abbeygate Cinema is to add two extra screens in the vacated bingo area in the former stalls. They will have 200 and 50 seats. It is hoped to have the new screens open by early 2019. {24294}

East Anglian Daily Times – 3 January, 1 February

CARDIFF



The former Gala Pavilion is now a bar called Coyote Ugly. It opened as the Philharmonic Hall in 1876 and became a full-time cinema in c1917. Films ceased in 1968 and bingo took over. It is unclear when bingo ceased and the premises were used as a bar. {19818}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken August 2007

CHORLEY (Lancs)



25 January marked exactly 60 years since the Empire cinema closed with 20,000 *Leagues under the Sea*. The building is now the Little Theatre and the group marked the occasion by showing the same film. {43984}

Chorley Guardian – 16 January; photo taken February 2006

CLEVEDON (North Somerset)

On 10 January the Curzon and its Christie organ were featured in *Great British Railway Journeys* on BBC2. Presenter Michael Portillo interviewed organist Bernie Brown at the console. There is a rare chance to hear the Christie in concert on 8 April with Simon Gledhill.

Sent in by Jeremy Buck

COLCHESTER (Essex)

The new three-screen Curzon being built in Queen Street has been delayed. Curzon's fitting team could not get access until mid-January. Opening is expected in June or July.

Daily Gazette – 24 January

DERBY

The freehold of the ten-screen Odeon has been sold for £19m. The sale will not affect the operation of the cinema, which is described as having "reliable and predictable income streams." {21128}

UK Cinema Property Update – 10 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth

DOUGLAS (Isle of Man)

Plans have been unveiled for a £25m redevelopment of a large area of the Quayside. They include a seven-screen Omniplex cinema. No timescale has been given.

Isle of Man Courier – 16 February

DOVER (Kent)

The new six-screen 909-seat Cineworld was due to open on 2 February but was put back to "mid-February". It is understood that Frankie and Benny's, which was to be next door to the cinema, has pulled out. The existing 77-seat Silver Screen cinema in the town has issued a press release saying it welcomes the competition and intends to stay open.

Dover Express – 1 February; sent in by Martin Tapsell

DUBLIN (Ireland)

Work has started to split screen ① at the nine-screen Savoy. The screen is one of the largest in Ireland and is regularly host to film premières but last January owners IMC said that the screen size will not be affected. {11585}

[thejournal.ie] – 12 January

Plans (announced on p25 of Bulletin 51/6) to demolish the former Screen cinema have been approved. However, an appeal has been launched against the proposed development of the site, which is said to include a 520-seat venue – whether this would be a cinema is not stated.

The Times, Ireland – 7 February

DUDLEY

The Council has started legal proceedings to reclaim the lease of the former Hippodrome from the campaign group wishing to reopen it. The Council says that the group have failed to achieve key milestones, despite an extension of time. The group said it was disappointed but it would not be the end of their fight.

Dudley News – 14 February; sent in by Ivan Harris

DUNDEE

Plans have been approved to transform the former college building in Constitution Road into flats and a cinema. Planning permission was originally granted in 2016 but the developers withdrew. The revised plans were submitted last year.

Evening Telegraph, Dundee – 14 February; Dundee Courier – 15 February

EDINBURGH (Portobello)



Plans to demolish the auditorium of the C(s)-listed former George, retaining the façade and building flats behind, had been recommended for approval but were rejected by Councillors. Campaigners had objected and produced an alternative scheme to restore the building as an arts centre, including film. It opened in March 1939 and films ceased in June 1974. It was used for bingo until two years ago. The CTA visited in September 2008.

Glasgow Herald – 16, 21 February; photo taken March 2004

GALWAY (Ireland)

The Pálás finally opened on 23 February. It has three screens with 321 seats and cost the State €8.4m. See p23 last Bulletin.

RTÉ website – 20, 21 February; sent in by Bob Bradshaw

GILLINGHAM (Kent)



On a visit to my old home town I just had to look to see if the Odeon/Embassy/Classic cinema was still there. Here my love of films started with Saturday morning pictures – Odeon boys and girls club. It was sad to see it all boarded-up with a To Let sign. Rileys snooker club was the last to use it after many years of bingo. It was a good cinema, which should never have gone over to bingo. It opened in October 1936 with 1,744 seats. It closed in June 1977 in favour of bingo. This gave way to snooker, which closed in 2017. {44509}

Sent in by Peter Cooper; photo taken April 2004

GRANTHAM (Lincs)

Savoy Cinemas is to be the operator of the new multiplex on St Peters Hill. It will have five screens and 650 seats. Construction may have started by the time you read this, with completion expected early in 2019. The existing two-screen Reel cinema will close when the new multiplex opens.

Grantham Journal – 22 December

GREAT YARMOUTH (Norfolk)

Work has started on stage one of a development at South Beach. Stage two is to include an eight-screen cinema; no date for this has been given.

Advertiser, Great Yarmouth – 28 December

HALSTEAD (Essex)



The former Savoy is set to be converted into a shop and six flats. The façade will be retained. It opened in 1916 and films ceased around 1970. It has since been used as a Chinese restaurant and a children's play centre. {30131}

Halstead Gazette – 2 February; photo taken July 2007

HANLEY (Stoke-on-Trent)

Plans for a ten-screen Light cinema with an IMAX screen have been delayed. Demolition on the former bus station site is not expected to start for "several months".

Sentinel (Stoke) – 2 January

HARWICH (Essex)



Heritage Lottery Funding for the Electric Palace. The second round interviews and presentations have now taken place at the HLF and at the cinema: the outcome will be decided by HLF in mid-March and will be made known to the Trust shortly afterwards. The plans for installation of the replica of Charles Thurston's Bioscope [pictured above] are going ahead. The Bioscope will be in place from the opening day of the Harwich Festival and it will be open throughout the 11-day Festival with a varied programme of classic films from early and mid-20th Century as well as old and new short films made in Harwich on various cameras and film ratios right through to the very latest Harwich Shorts, made with the very latest equipment. On the final day of the Festival (Sunday 1 July) it is planned to have a Gala show in the Bioscope featuring a screening of the world famous film *The Battleship Potemkin* in a superb new restoration accompanied at the piano by top international silent film accompanist Chris Jarrett. We are also investigating the possibility of a hard-hat tour for the CTA of the Electric Palace building restoration. See also obituary p31.

Sent in by Chris Strachan

IRVINE (North Ayrshire)

Plans for a new cinema are on the scrapheap after the Council's bid to buy the Rivergate shopping centre collapsed. The cinema was to have been funded by profits from the buy-out of the centre.

Irvine Herald – 24 January

KIDDERMINSTER (Worcs)

The Council has approached a number of national operators to see if they would be interested in opening a multi-screen cinema on the eastern side of the town centre. It is part of a major regeneration project at Lion Fields. There is already a four-screen Reel cinema in the town.

*The Shuttle, Kidderminster – 21 December;
Express & Star, Wolverhampton – 31 January*

KIRKBY (Knowsley)

Three buildings in Newtown Gardens are to be demolished to make way for a new leisure scheme, which includes a Reel cinema. No size or opening date has been given.

Challenge, Knowsley – 1 February

LANCING (West Sussex)

Cinematographer Sir Sydney Samuelson has praised the Council's decision to preserve the façade of the former Luxor in any redevelopment. Sir Sydney started his career at the cinema as a rewind boy. {35057}

The Argus, Worthing – 7 February; sent in by Barry Quinton

LEEDS (West Yorks)

A £14m revamp of the West Yorkshire Playhouse has been given the green light by Leeds City Council. It will create a third performance space and transform the entrance hall. Outdated equipment will also be replaced. Arts Council England is contributing £6.6m with £4.4m coming from the local authority and £3m from the theatre's own resources and fundraising activity. The project is due for completion in 2019.

The Stage – 21 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

LEIGH-ON-SEA (Essex)



The former Corona, which lost its rear third in 2014, with the space being used for new terraced houses on the road behind the cinema, has been completely demolished. 22 flats are to be built on the site.

Sent in by David Simpson; photo taken July 2007

LEWES (West Sussex)

The recently-opened Depot cinema is among four finalists in the South East in the running for the Royal Town Planning Institute's awards for planning excellence. Designed by Burrell Foley Fischer, the three-screen cinema opened in May 2017. The CTA visited in August 2017 and it is the subject of a detailed article in the 2017 edition of *Picture House*.

Sussex Express – 14 February

LIVERPOOL (Allerton)



I was in Allerton Road, Liverpool 18 this afternoon and two large banners have appeared on the front of the former **Classic / Odeon** cinema, inviting people to apply for membership of the gym that is shortly to open within the building. This was mooted a couple of years ago but, owing to the lack of any obvious development work going on, I hoped the project might have foundered. Clearly, no such luck! No doubt they have already completely gutted and destroyed the interior, rendering its future re-opening as a cinema completely impossible. This cinema was no architectural beauty (unlike its glorious predecessor, of which I still have fond if slightly fading memories!) but certainly possessed a nice, comfortable, single-screen auditorium in which to watch films. {24981}

Sent in by Tim Adams; photo taken July 2007

LIVERPOOL (Central)

Everyman is to open a four-screen cinema in the autumn at the Metquarter.

Liverpool Echo – 22 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth

The Futurist was demolished in 2016. Now a panel showing the façade has been installed on the new development.

Liverpool Echo – 2 February; sent in by Mike Taylor

LIVERPOOL (Speke)

The new eleven-screen Cineworld at the New Mersey Retail Park is scheduled to open in late summer. Construction started just under a year ago. The new cinema could be a threat to the Woolton Picture House, which is about two miles away.

Liverpool Echo – 10 January; sent in by Mike Taylor

LONDON (Brent Cross)

A major extension to the shopping centre is planned; it includes – yes – a multiplex cinema!

Sunday Telegraph – 17 December

LONDON (Chadwell Heath)

Film was due to return to the former Embassy / Gaumont on 10 February; a local residents' group presented *Titanic*. At the semi-formal event, there will be music on arrival, a buffet dinner during the film's intermission and dancing afterwards. The cinema opened in May 1934 and films ceased in July 1966. It became a bingo club, which closed in June 2014. It is now the Mayfair Banqueting Suite. See p6 Bulletin 51/6. {14646}

Ilford Recorder – 29 January; sent in by Nigel Pitt

Editor's Note: Google StreetView has been inside the Mayfair and the pictures are excellent. Go to [www.google.co.uk/maps] and search for "Mayfair Chadwell" then drag the orange man to the street or the blue circles on the building.

LONDON (Dalston)

Hollywood star Idris Elba proposed to his girlfriend at the Rio where he was attending a preview of his movie *Yardie*. She said "Yes" and the audience cheered wildly. {10557}

Scottish Sunday Mail – 12 February; sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (East Ham)



The former **Granada** is now a trampoline centre. It opened in November 1936 and films ceased in November 1974. It was bingo from January 1976 to November 2014. Proposals to turn it into a banqueting hall came to naught. {14650}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken April 2006

LONDON (Herne Hill)

The freehold of what was part of the Cinema Grand / Pullman Cinema / Bingo Hall in Herne Hill is for sale, a pinch at £1,100,000. The front of the building was altered in 1932 to the designs of George Coles, the eminent cinema architect. The parapet at the top of the building once carried the words **CINEMA** or **CINEMA GRAND**; the adornments on the front of the building and the parapet are the only reminders of the building's glorious past.

Sent in by Robert Holden

LONDON (Islington)

The Screen on the Green banned films for one day on 1 February for "Time to Talk" day, with big advertisements in the *Metro* and *Evening Standard*. The event aims to get more people to talk openly about mental health. People were encouraged to come in and chat, instead of watching a film. {15078}

Islington Gazette – 1 February; sent in by Allen Eyles

AE comments: If this is such a good idea, can we expect to see it extended to all the Everyman sites next year?

LONDON (Kilburn)

On 1 February the Kingsgate Community Centre showed the 1954 crime drama *On the Waterfront* starring Marlon Brando and Rod Steiger. The screening was for over 60s and admission was only 50p!

Camden New Journal – 25 January; sent in by Gavin McGrath

LONDON (New Cross)

The 105-seat Curzon at Goldsmiths University has reopened after a refurbishment. It has 4k projection and Dolby 7.1 sound. Tickets are £7 for locals and £5 for students at peak times. {51559}

News Shopper, Lewisham – 23 January

LONDON (South Bank)

The British Film Institute [BFI] has dropped its proposals for a new building near Hungerford Bridge after deciding that it would not be able to obtain permission for the £130m scheme in time. The proposal had been supported by leading actors, including Dame Helen Mirren, Idris Elba and Tom Hiddleston.

Sunday Times – 4 January

LONDON (Stoke Newington)

The former Savoy has received grants of £1.9m towards its £3m restoration as an arts centre. Planning permission was granted last July. No dates for the work have been given. See p25 Bulletin 51/3. {14878}

Evening Standard – 14 February; sent in by Gary Donaldson & Tom Laughlan

AE comments: This was one of the finest auditoriums designed by WR Glen for the ABC circuit and I hope that its ceiling can be restored in appropriate colours along with its concealing lighting, rather than painted out in black like the Genesis Mile End and that the proscenium arch is fully preserved.

LONDON (Sutton)

The Empire was due to reopen on 9 February. All nine screens have been fitted with “ultra-plush superior standard seating” as well as the chance to upgrade to luxury recliners or pair up on a double sofa. There will be two large-format IMPACT screens with Dolby Atmos sound and a 32-seat D-Box screen where the seats move synchronised to the film. {21190}

Sutton Guardian – 1 February

LONDON (Upper Norwood)



Everyman has provisionally exchanged contracts to operate a four-screen cinema in the former Rialto/Granada. No opening date has been announced. The venue opened in October 1928 with 1,393 seats in stalls and circle. Films ceased in May 1968 and bingo took over; that closed in mid-2009. The Kingsway International Christian Centre purchased it but was refused planning permission to use it as a church and, after eight years of wrangling, sold the building.

Croydon Advertiser – 2 February; sent in by Robert Holden; photo taken April 2006

LONDON (Waterloo)

The Old Vic is planning a major refurbishment, warning it could close without the upgrade. The existing foyer would be reconfigured, allowing it to open as a café during the day. The number of female and disabled toilets will be increased – this issue is seen as costing bookings. The theatre is preparing to celebrate its 200th anniversary. It has gone bankrupt 13 times, receives no government subsidies and needs £3.6m a year. Its 200th anniversary merits special stamps from Royal Mail to be issued on 11 May; no details appear to be available yet.

The Stage – 18 January; Evening Standard – 12 February; sent in by Tom Laughlan & R David Simpson; photo top next column



The Old Vic in September 2006

LONDON (West End)

Students from University College London have staged a recreation of the cinema-going experience in the late 1960s as part of their degree course. They dressed up as usherettes and took over the *Prince Charles* cinema for a screening of the 1968 film *Barbarella*, accompanied by a newsreel, adverts and cartoons. The screening was part of a three-year project examining the importance of cinema in people's social lives fifty years ago and has helped create an important digital archive for future research. The only difference to the 1960s was that the audience was not allowed to smoke in the auditorium!

Evening Standard – 26 January; sent in by Tom Laughlan & Anthony Wills

The Windmill Theatre has had its licence revoked by Westminster City Council. Undercover detectives working for an anonymous women's rights group found that dancers violated the 'no touching' rules and witnessed "intimate touching and sex acts". The venue has 21 days to appeal and could be closed. It seems that the Council has succeeded where the Luftwaffe failed!

Evening Standard – 10, 12 January; The Sun – 13 January; The Stage – 18 January; sent in by Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton



The grade II listed Odeon Covent Garden [above] (actually in Shaftesbury Avenue) is to be redeveloped into a hotel. Camden Planning Application 2017/705/P. There will be a four-screen cinema in the basement. It opened as the Saville Theatre in October 1931 with 1,185 seats in stalls and circle. It was internally gutted in 1970 to provide two ABC cinemas with 616 and 580 seats and 70mm capability. Odeon took over in 2000 and soon divided it into four screens. {911}

Evening Standard – 18 January; sent in by Tom Laughlan & Ken Roe; photo taken February 2007

AE comments: The building was listed in 1998 to protect Gilbert Bayes' epic exterior frieze and medallions and so we can expect the frontage to be retained. It is a shame to lose four decent-sized auditoria but we will have to see how large the basement ones are.

Curzon has confirmed it will refurbish its Soho site, despite the threat that it could be shut down to make way for Crossrail 2. Curzon said it has not heard from TfL for "months".

City AM – 25 January

The grade I listed Theatre Royal Haymarket is up for sale. The lease from the Crown Estate is owned by a company set up in the name of long-time Theatre Royal impresario Louis Michael. Given the length of time left on it, it's likely to fetch millions. Will its resident ghost, former manager John Buckstone, add to or detract from any investor?

Evening Standard – 23 January; BBC News website – 24 January; The Stage – 1 February; sent in by Barry Quinton, R David Simpson & Tom Laughlan

A multi-million pound refurbishment of the Theatre Royal Drury Lane has been approved by Westminster City Council. It will restore public areas and reduce the number of seats from 2,200 to 2,000. Work is expected to start in 2019 and take 18 months, during which time the theatre will be 'dark'. The exact cost is not known but believed to be around £35m.

The Stage – 21 December; sent in by Barry Quinton

The Odeon Leicester Square closed in early January for remodelling. Odeon is keeping very tight-lipped about what will be happening, only saying there will be a large-format screen [but not IMAX] and that it will remain as a single-screen and the Compton organ will be retained. Reopening is scheduled for "later in the year". {841}

Odeon Website

LONGRIDGE (Lancs)

The Palace has a new owner. Scaffolding has gone up outside the building, which is currently closed whilst necessary repairs are taking place. An initial reopening of March has been pencilled in, with further investment to come as and when the time is right. See p28 Bulletin 51/5. {6903}

Lancashire Post – 23 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth

LUTON (Beds)



I walked into town earlier today and was surprised to see the 'For Sale / To Let' sign on the former Picturedrome in Park Street. On the entrance door is a notice saying the building has been repossessed. It's not long since it reopened as a church. The cinema opened in April 1911 and it closed in October 1937. It was a motorcycle shop for many years and latterly a snooker club. {45809}

Sent in & photo by Margaret Burgoine

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE

The sixteen-screen Cineworld (ex Odeon/Empire) has had a 4DX screen added.

The Journal, Newcastle – 21 December

NEWMARKET (Suffolk)

The former Doric has been converted into flats; the façade has been retained. The unveiling was 81 years to the day since the cinema opened in March 1937. It closed in July 1964 and has since been used as a nightclub, which closed in 2015. {24935}

Newmarket Journal – 22 February; sent in by Stewart Kidd

NEWTON ABBOT (Devon)

Scaffolding has gone up outside the grade II listed Alexandra cinema. Improvements include repointing and cleaning the stonework, repairing gutters, downpipes and window frames and a fresh lick of paint. The work is due to be completed by April. {25182}

Newton Abbot & Mid-Devon Advertiser – 19 January; photo top next column



The Alexandra Cinema Newton Abbot in August 2003

OBAN (Highland)

Plans were unveiled at the AGM of the Phoenix Cinema to make it more like a community centre. The smaller screen would be moved to make way for a bank of 'genderless' toilets, showers to capitalise on the new pontoons nearby and a hut for micro-businesses outside. The second phase would install a pull-down screen for screen ② with room for 54 more seats. There would also be a kitchen and community space. A subsequent phase alters screen ①, installing all-tiered seating for 200-250 people, reducing the legroom. Some seats at the front would be on rollers to make way for a dance floor; the stage will be maintained.

Oban Times – 25 January

OXFORD

The new five-screen Curzon opened in the Westgate Centre on 1 December; seating capacities are 140, 168, 130, 78 & 78. One screen has a 35mm projector – see p29 Bulletin 51/6. {56839}

Oxford Times – 14 December

A branding agency has been hired to boost the image of the 121-seat Ultimate Picture Palace. The campaign is based on the cinema's no-nonsense house rules with the slogan "No Adverts, No Popcorn, No Talking, Know Cinema". The news follows the opening of the new Curzon [see above]. {19416}

Bournemouth Daily Echo – 19 January; sent in by Philip Stevens

PERTH

Preliminary work has begun for the new shopping centre at Mill Quarter. It will include a cinema but no operator has been named or opening date given.

Dundee Courier – 6 February

PETERHEAD (Aberdeen)



Gala Bingo in the former Regal closed in January. The 751-seat cinema opened in 1939 and films ceased in the early 1960s and it had been bingo ever since. The future of the building is uncertain. {45846}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken September 2008

POOLE (Dorset)

The location for a proposed nine-screen cinema in Falkland Square has been questioned by Historic England.

Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 22 December

PORTH (Rhondda Cynon Taff)

The former Central went to auction on 13 February. The guide price was only £18,000 but it sold for £27,500; the identity of the buyer is unknown. An auction catalogue with the building's particulars can be downloaded from [www.seelandco.com/auctions]. The cinema opened around 1916 and closed in the mid-1960s. It became a bingo hall, which closed around 2009. The building has been empty since and boarded up. It is in a poor condition, rendering internal viewing impossible. See p7 Bulletin 51/4. {30250}

Wales Online – 25 January

PORTSMOUTH

The six-screen Odeon at Port Solent, a marina on the western boundary of Portsmouth, had a sound upgrade in all screens just before Christmas. The sound is particularly good at this site!

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe

PRESTON (Lancs)

The seven-screen Vue at Walton-le-Dale has been upgraded with a new entrance. This is part of an overall spruce-up of the Capitol Centre. {25252}

Lancashire Evening Post – 1 February

RUSHDEN (Northants)

Construction has begun on the new fourteen-screen Cineworld at Rushden Lakes. Completion is expected next January.

Corby Evening Telegraph – 8 February

RYHOPE (Sunderland)

The former Grand held an open day on 3 February. This was the last chance to see inside before it is dismantled brick-by-brick and moved to the Beamish open-air museum; the project will take four years. The cinema will be restored as part of the museum's new 1950s town and will once again screen films and Pathé newsreels. It operated from prior to 1914 until the 1960s. It was then used for bingo and later a garage. {49699}

Sunderland Echo, The Journal Newcastle – 1 February; sent in by Carl Chesworth

SLEAFORD (Lincs)

Redevelopment of the Market Place will include a two-screen cinema. The town used to have a cinema until 1984; the building is now a nightclub.

Sleaford Standard – 10 January

SOLIHULL (West Midlands)

A 364-seat superscreen has been installed at the nine-screen 1,855-seat Cineworld. It has a 44-channel Dolby Atmos sound system. The multiplex has also had a general refurbishment. {25373}

Birmingham Mail, Solihull News – 15 December

ST AGNES (Cornwall)



The former Regal has been put up for sale for £795,000. It was originally an Oddfellows' Hall and reportedly cost just £600 to build. It became a cinema in 1934 and closed about 1978. For 30 years it was used as a restaurant, the St Agnes Meadery and more recently a wine bar. {49954}

Cornwall Live – 8 January; photo taken June 2008

STOCKPORT

The new ten-screen Light at Redrock clocked up almost 33,000 visitors in its first five weeks of opening. It had also sold 3,399 bags of popcorn, made 2,420 cups of coffee and sold 1,723 pints of lager. The company says it is their most successful opening to date. {56789}

Stockport Express – 24 January; Manchester Weekly News – 1 February

The ten-screen Cineworld at Grand Central will be demolished in April. It opened in November 1991 and closed in November 2017 when the new Light [see above] opened. The site will eventually be redeveloped but is likely to be used as a car park until 2024! {25390}

Manchester Evening News – 24 February; North West Place – 25 February; sent in by Richard Lyons

STORNOWAY (Isle of Lewis)

The An Lanntair leisure centre is opening on the last Sunday of the month on a trial basis until March. Tea and coffee will be available but the bar and restaurant will remain closed. Church leaders oppose the opening. Leisure facilities on the island have traditionally closed on the Sabbath; there was a time when children's playgrounds were locked at dusk on Saturdays! See miscellany p29.

Scottish Daily Express – 9 January; Scottish Sun – 28 January; sent in by Terry Hanstock, Tom Laughlan & Philip Stevens

STOWMARKET (Suffolk)

The 234-seat Regal is celebrating record attendances. It enjoyed its busiest ever December with 8,392 visitors, 1,300 more than last year, an increase of 14%. In total, almost 64,000 visits were made in 2017. The theatre still hosts live shows. The Council-owned theatre is expected to get approval from the Council's Cabinet for a £1.56m grant in addition to a £1m loan to fund two extra cinema screens, seating 87 and 57 and an upgrade of the main auditorium. Completion is expected by May 2020. {6241}

Stowmarket Mercury – 11 January; East Anglian Daily Times – 1 February; he Stage – 15 February; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

STREET (Somerset)



Plans to transform the former Maxime into a bar and restaurant have been approved. It opened as the Playhouse in January 1921 in a Victorian Hall and became the Maxime in July 1946 and films ceased in September 1989. It was last used as a nightclub. {50357}

[somersetlive.co.uk] – 6 February; photo taken August 2003

SWANSEA

The 48-seat Cinema & Co hosted Wales' first dog-friendly screening in February. It showed the Disney film *Homeward Bound* to a sold-out audience – and their dogs! It was advertised as "dog furriently" and apparently there were few 'accidents'. {52976}

BBC News website – 17 February; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Elliot Griffiths.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS (Kent)

The opening of the new three-screen Everyman on the site of the former ABC [etc] has been delayed. Building work could start at the end of this year or early in 2019.

Times of Tunbridge Wells – 24 January

WAKEFIELD (West Yorks)

Plans to develop the former Market Hall have been approved, including a nine-screen cinema. No operator was mentioned in the report.

Yorkshire Post – 27 December

WALLSEND (North Tyneside)

The nine-screen Odeon at Silverlink opened a 169-seat IMAX screen last December.

The Journal (Newcastle) – 18 January; photo on front cover

WELLINGTON (Shropshire)

Campaigners trying to save the former Clifton say the move now appears unlikely to happen as a developer has submitted a planning application for 52 flats and a retail space on the site; the façade would be retained. The group will now try to push ahead with its plans to take on the former HSBC bank and turn that into an 80-seat cinema instead.

Shropshire Star – 2, 8, 13 February; sent in by John Powell

WILMSLOW (Cheshire)



The Town Council has agreed to explore options for turning the Rex back into a cinema. It opened in October 1936 and closed in June 1995. The rear of the auditorium is now a mix of retail and leisure units. The lobby, café and part of the auditorium were a Multiyork furniture store, which company has gone into administration. {33859}

[wilmslow.co.uk] – 20 February; photo taken June 2006

WOODHALL SPA (Lincs)



The Kinema in the Woods is planning to add a third screen to cope with demand. Admissions have risen more than 75% in the last five years. The main screen seats 231, has an organ and rear projection; Kinema Too seats 92. The proposed new screen will be built to the right of the existing building and will also seat 92. The foyer will be altered to provide access to the new screen and the car park will be enlarged. Start dates for the work will be decided pending planning permission. {6373}

East Coast & Wold Target – 17 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth; photo taken July 2017

SMALL ADS

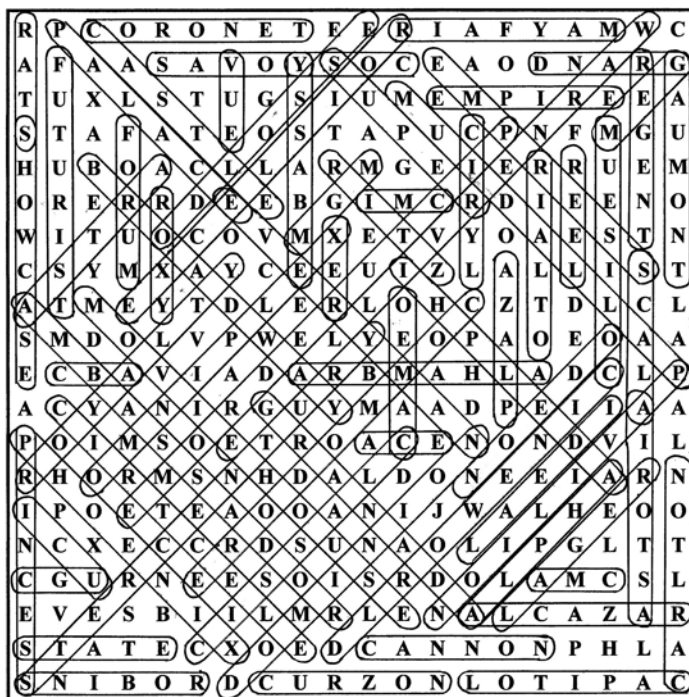
The rate for small ads from members is £3 for 25 words with name and address free, plus 15p for each extra word. Non-members rates: £5 & 25p respectively.

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

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

Display rates: eighth page – £15; quarter page – £25;
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CINEMA WORD SEARCH ANSWERS



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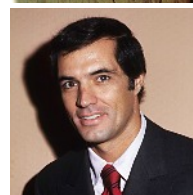
PETER WYNGARDE 90

Will be remembered for playing Jason King in *Department S* and its spin-offs. He also appeared as the masked Klytus in *Flash Gordon*. He played the King in 260 performances of *The King and I* at London's Adelphi Theatre in the 1970s and had many other stage and TV credits.



JOHN GAVIN 86

John's film credits include Sam Loomis in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Julius Caesar in Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* and Trevor Graydon, opposite Julie Andrews, in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.



BELLA EMBERG 80

Best known for her role as Blunderwoman opposite Russ Abbot's hapless superhero Cooperman. On TV she was in *The Benny Hill Show*, *Z Cars*, *Doctor Who* and *Grange Hill*. On film appeared in Mel Brooks' *History of the World Part One*. She had just completed filming on Idris Elba's new Sky One comedy *The Long Run*.



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LETTERS

FEEDBACK

The John Barry Theatre at Pinewood (p31 Bulletin Jan/Feb 2018) was originally called Theatre 7, so named because there were six existing preview theatres, all of them small. Theatre 7 was to enable films being made in the studio to be viewed in cinema conditions on a large screen at different stages of production, hence the range of projection equipment including 70mm, double-head and multi-track sound. The theatre was fully sound-proofed with a special entry door from the foyer of the building in which it was housed. Other rooms in the building were additional editing rooms. In the late 1970s it was realised that the theatre was invariably unused on Friday evenings and at the week-end so Club 7 was formed. This was to give people who lived near Pinewood Studios a local cinema of a very high quality and one with adjacent car parking. The Club had its own manager and clubroom, where drinks could be purchased. All seats were bookable by telephone and most performances were sold out. Films were arranged by Odeon. When I was heading Rank production I watched many films in working hours in Theatre 7 and it was a great place to see them

Tony Williams

I thoroughly enjoyed the Jan/Feb issue of the Bulletin and particularly Wilf Wanders West on the back page. It identified two cinemas that were previously unknown to me, the Electric Theatre and the Kings Hall – amazing! I might be mistaken but isn't the Palladium another guise of the original Pyke's? It became the New Palladium after rebuilding to the plans of J Stanley Beard in 1923; I have read this somewhere, perhaps in the *Amber Valley Gazetteer of Suburban Cinemas*. Regarding the search for a cinema on Goldhawk Road, I have discovered a book of postcards; this image from 1914 is simply captioned "Goldhawk Road". It shows the Seven Stars pub on the corner of Paddenswick Road; the pub is still there (under a different name) but the cinema next door is gone – the site appears to be a garage. At the time the photo was taken it may have been a 'Palace of Varieties' as the subjects depicted would suggest. The name at the time isn't clear – how annoying!

Simon Walker



Further to Wilf's Wanderings published in the last issue, he would have had to wander about three-quarters of a mile from Shepherd's Bush Green down Goldhawk Road to find the site of the New Park Cinema [above]. It would have been on the left hand side almost opposite the end of Askew Road. Formerly the silent Park Cinema of 1912, it opened in about 1930 and first appears in the 1931 KYB with 800 seats. Unfortunately it was a victim of WW2 and is marked on the LCC Bomb Damage map of the area as "Seriously damaged, doubtful if repairable". It last appears in KYB for 1942 as "closed". The site is now subsumed into a post-war extension of Ravenscourt Park.

Neville C Taylor

In the last Bulletin the New Tivoli in Edinburgh was on the birthday list. It is questionable as to whether it opened in 1938 as two sources state 1934, the year after it was rebuilt.

[www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building_full.php?id=216936]
[www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/edinburgh/newtivoli/index.html]

King of the Jungle dates from 1933 although I don't suppose that's much help.

Gavin McGrath

The latest issue of *Picture House* (No42) has a fascinating feature on Commissionaires and Usherettes. I can add a few snippets of information. When usherettes wore fitted uniforms it was not unknown – or even quite usual – for new staff to be selected on the basis that they had to fit the uniform of an usherette who had left. Later life for the manager became easier when uniforms were wraps and therefore one size would fit most applicants. In its heyday Granada has the most elaborate usherette uniforms. Most people did not realise that they were made of silk. I was intrigued by John Broadley's comment that there could be male ushers as well as female usherettes and I wonder if this was in the 1930s. My cinema-going began in the 1940s and I never remember seeing an usher, the only male staff being commissionaires, plus of course the projectionists. In recent years, the advent of art and more specialised cinemas, plus 'equality' and a changing job market, has seen as many cinema roles filled by (usually young) men as by women. Allocated seating and separate performances has changed how audiences occupy an auditorium but an usherette with a torch is sadly missed. You realise this when people struggle to find their seat and navigate steps with difficulty. Auditorium staff always had to be quiet but in Paramount Cinemas they were forbidden to talk. All seating was done using a form of sign language. I never saw this but I imagine it was not unlike that used by race course bookies. Those were the days.

Tony Williams

PROJECTION ISSUES

The latest issue of the *Journal of British Cinema and Television* (15 (1) 2018) is subtitled *The Projection Issue* and focuses on the work and experiences of cinema projectionists. Articles include 'Going digital: the experience of the transition to digital projection in UK cinemas', 'Women in the box: female projectionists in post-war British cinemas', 'Certificated operators versus 'handle-turners': the British film industry's first trade union' and 'Disabled operators: training disabled ex-servicemen as projectionists during the Great War.' Most of these are available in full on open access at:

[www.euppublishing.com/toc/jbctv/15/1]



The projection room staff of the Gaumont Chadwell Heath 1943

The issue editors are all involved in The Projection Project, a research project set up to investigate cinematic projection. Based at the University of Warwick and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council it aims to document "... the projectionist's role as it passes into history, following the switch of most cinemas to digital projection between 2010 and 2012." It also looks at the contemporary expansion of projected images outside of the cinema. There's a Virtual Projection Box containing over 80 audio clips from projectionists and commentary from the research team. Further information at: [projectionproject.warwick.ac.uk].

Terry Hanstock

SOUND CHECK

It's been ten years since I was a projectionist but I felt that old feeling of hopelessness after reading recent letters from David A Ellis and David Simpson. It never mattered how we adjusted the sound, somebody always complained! It was either too loud or too soft. And it was always my fault! Not that I ever paid much attention to the complaints as I set the sound to the level that suited the film or the amount of

people in the auditorium. Unfortunately, that's now a thing of the past. Projectionists are no more and sound checks, from what I'm told by current cinema staff, are pretty much a thing of the past. For the record, I think David Simpson might have enjoyed visiting a site where I was projecting. I like my films so I can hear them! I did disagree with Carlton Advertising, though, who once sent an email saying that their adverts must be played at a certain level that was forty per cent higher than what we normally played a feature at. An assistant manager even came into the projection box to ensure we were doing what Carlton said but I just ignored him. He never took it further. As a projectionist I always enjoyed showing a 20th Century Fox film. I would blast that fanfare so loud that the patrons would literally jump out of their seats. Happy days!

Mike Whitcombe

GAYTIME

You published a small image of a poster for *Gaytime* (presumably as a humorous space filler) in the last issue. Readers may be interested to know a little more about it. *Gaytime* was quite a lavish summer show that played theatres around the coast from the end of the 1940s to the late 1960s. There was normally a cast of 14, including a principal comedian, speciality act, two singers and six dancers, plus piano and drums in the pit. The shows were produced by a man with the unusual name of Hedley Claxton. Among the theatres where they played 15-week seasons were the Palace Morecambe, Knightstone Weston-Super-Mare, Hoe Plymouth, Marine Pavilion Folkestone and Esplanade Bognor Regis, where I was part of the stage crew in 1966. It was hard work as there were five changes of programme every two weeks! All these theatres disappeared years ago but the Babbacombe at Torquay survives and still features summer variety. Among the stars who began their careers in *Gaytime* were Bruce Forsyth and Benny Hill.

Anthony Wills

ADVERTS IN THEATRES



The Winter Gardens Morecambe with screen on safety curtain

There was a letter from Tom Pate on p28 of the last Bulletin. I remember him so well, I think he went to be manager at the newly refurbished Manchester Opera House or some other large theatre in the North. On Fridays he used to pay out our wages from the Stage Door Keeper's window. He comments about the slides showing on the safety curtain. At the Palladium, this was normally carried out from when the auditorium opened. One of the guys who worked in the lime box at the rear of the Upper Circle did this job. However, I had to do this once for five nights. There was this ancient slide projector, it must have been there from when Frank Matcham designed the theatre! You had to fire up this huge monstrosity with two carbons rods and look through this tiny glazed hole to make sure they were ¼" apart to stop them fusing together, adjusting this tiny wheel as they burnt. Then you operated this gate that held two slides, you slid it across then changed the slide you had just shown, also having to re-focus the front lens for each slide. I hated it. The relief when I finished each night and running down to the control room below in the circle was enormous. Les used to send me up saying he was waiting for the lantern to go out when the rods fused. I don't know why he was so cruel, as I told him I would faint with the shock – fortunately it never happened and I survived.

Ron Knee

FROM CELLULOID TO CEREAL

Gavin McGrath's article in the latest Bulletin was most interesting but I just want to correct one point in relation to his update on the original book. The Co-op isn't as unified an organization as Gavin may assume. It started with thousands of small local societies and even today there are more than a dozen societies in addition to the Co-operative Group (known to us oldies as the CWS!). The green 'Co-operative' branding was intended to be national (led by the Group) but was never accepted by all societies. Now the Group has reverted to the much more recognizable blue/grey logo mentioned by Gavin but some of the larger societies (especially in the Midlands and parts of East Anglia) are still using green. They may or may not change in time (more expense!) but some (like East of England) never went green in the first place and will probably take some persuading to adopt the latest logo. If you have a strong local image, why change it? I mention all this because some who go looking for cinemas converted to Co-ops may be misled if they only look for the blue/grey logo.

Chris Godbold

WILD WANDERS IN SEARCH OF A STUDIO

I found Wilf's article in Bulletin 51/6 very interesting. When anyone ever mentions film studios I always reach for my copy of *British Film Studios* by Patricia Warren (Batsford 1995). This is the most comprehensive book I know on the subject. Ten years of comprehensive research has revealed details of more than 90 film studios since the early days of the last Century. There are some details about Marylebone studios and the Manchester studios of Mancunian pictures. Mancunian Pictures appears to have used several places to make films, not just in Manchester but also in Marylebone and some smaller studios on this country. It is not known what happened to the building after film production ceased. Patricia Warren's book also contains more information about Korda and Shepperton Studios. Apparently he renamed the studios London Film Studios when he took them over, although he still owed millions of pounds to the Prudential Insurance for building Denham Studios twenty years earlier! I understood that there was a 50% government holding in the company under the British Lion Holdings Act of 1956 to save the studios from closing. British Lion was taken over by EMI in the late 1960s and the Government Holding was lost. This however was not mentioned in the book but I remember it at the time.

A couple of years ago I obtained a BFI release called *London in the Raw*. Made in the 1960s, it depicted a mixture of London scenes from the period, including Harrow schoolboys, betting shops (new in the 1960s), health clubs, sexualised nudity, Turkish belly dancing and drug references. The commentary stated that there were less than 600 drug addicts in the country! It also had short scenes from a Jewish company, including *The Overcoat*. It is not known if any Jewish theatre still exists in this country. I remember attending a performance of *Look Back in Anger* by the Maccabi Players in Leicester in the 1960s (I have never seen the film). I did not realise this was a Jewish company and spent the evening surrounded by men with long beards and skull caps! However they very friendly, as Jewish people usually are.

Riverside Studios Hammersmith also made three films starring Vera Lynn, who is now a hundred years old. All three films are now available on DVD. Last year Elsie and Doris Waters' film *Gert and Daisy Clean Up* (1942) was shown at Watersmeet at the *Renown Film Festival*. The restorer said that although credits showed Riverside Hammersmith, the film was made in Leeds! No reason for this was given. Although I heard that there were some studios in Leeds, I know nothing about them and they are not mentioned in Patricia Warren's excellent book. I do not know of the legal validity of a film's credits but crediting a film to a different studio may cause problems to film historians in the future.

Ian Patterson

CHRISTMAS TIMINGS

It was five-o'clock in the evening on Christmas Eve 1991 and, along with the other staff, I was standing in the entrance foyer of the three-screen ABC Portsmouth. We were hoping that nobody would turn up for the last show of the day, programmed to end more than an hour and a half after the other films we were screening. The film was the hugely enjoyable Kevin Costner blockbuster *Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves*, which had been playing since July. It had opened to sell-out houses that, during the opening week, would heave a collective gasp of astonishment, followed by spontaneous applause, in the final reel when an unbilled Sean Connery rode into frame as good King Richard.



The ABC Portsmouth in August 2000

Six months on we were finally saying goodbye to this money-making flick. We had already stripped out the ads and trailers and were planning to break the film down when a solitary patron entered the building, asking to buy a ticket to see *Robin Hood*. She had already seen it twenty times, she claimed but, being a huge fan of Costner, wanted to enjoy it one more time. Our manager, who had an uncanny ability to bring down the last show so she could have the building locked up by ten-thirty on normal nights, wasn't keen to hang around on Christmas Eve either. She offered the woman some complimentary tickets, a *Robin Hood* film poster and some mince pies if she didn't see the film for one last time on the big screen. The lady thought Christmas had come early. She accepted the bribes and we all got to go home ninety minutes early.

Those of you who have never worked in the cinema trade might think we treated this patron a little unfairly. After all, working at a cinema means working when other people are having fun. Late nights, weekends, public holidays – it's all part of the job. And for the most part I would agree. During my twenty years in the cinema trade I happily worked weekends and public holidays without a second thought. But cinema workers are real people! Cinema executives may not think so – just look at the way Picturehouse are currently treating their employees – but they are and closing a few hours earlier than normal on Christmas Eve is hardly going to bankrupt the firm. By the time I left the trade ten years ago, Christmas opening times were extending. Whereas we once came down by five on Christmas Eve and opened for just two houses on Boxing Day, we were suddenly staying open until at least eight at night on 24 December and were opening from before lunch on the 26th.

Being a far more multicultural society than we were in the mid-1990s, it makes sense to extend opening times but even I was shocked to see the opening times this Christmas at the new ten-screen Odeon in Bournemouth. On Christmas Eve the first shows – for *Pitch Perfect* and *Paddington 2* – were at 9am. Nothing much wrong with that, you might say. Dump the kids at the flicks while you run around getting those last minute gifts. But the last show of the day was a showing of *Star Wars, The Last Jedi*, a 152-minute feature that didn't begin until 11:20pm. That meant the movie wouldn't end until almost 2am on Christmas Day. Twelve hours later, while most of us were sitting down to our eagerly awaited Christmas Day dinner, the Odeon Bournemouth was back on screen with *Jumanji* and *Star Wars*. Boxing Day, for the put-upon staff, was little better. The first film of the day, *Ferdinand*, was at 9am while the final show of the day, *Daddy's Home 2*, didn't get on screen until 11:15pm. Those members of staff who did work on Christmas Day were, I'm told, paid triple time while those on salary were given a £300 lump sum. No member of staff was forced to work Christmas Day – it was volunteers only – but, having worked for Odeon, I'm sure that Head Office staff weren't asked to 'volunteer'.

My local Odeon, the six-screen Port Solent site in Portsmouth, didn't open on Christmas Day, much to the relief of the staff. Next year might be different but I hope not. I love the cinema and my favourite Christmas Eve tradition is to go to the cinema in the morning. But cinema staff need time to prepare those vegetables and defrost the turkey and deserve at least one day when they can actually enjoy being with their family. If Charles Dickens was writing *A Christmas Carol* today, he would have made Scrooge a cinema executive!

Mike Whitcombe

HELP WANTED

Did you ever go to the Jacey Piccadilly and/or Times Baker Street cinemas in the late 1960s or early 70s? Do you remember the mood, décor, or any of the films that you saw, or any incidents that took place? I am writing the biography of cinema renaissance man Antony Balch, who programmed both theatres, as well as making his own films and would love to talk to anyone with stories to tell, no matter how apparently trivial. You might have seen Balch's *Secrets of Sex*, *The Weird Weirder*, *Häxan - Witchcraft through the Ages* (narrated by William Burroughs) or any of the other similarly unusual productions that he screened. If you have any other experiences of or stories to share about Antony Balch, I'd also be very grateful if you got in touch. I can be reached on [wjefowler@gmail.com].

William Fowler

CROWDFUNDING BOOK

We are excited to have teamed with Unbound to crowdfund *A Guide to Modernism in Metro-Land*, the essential guidebook to discovering the modernist treasures of London's suburbs. Inspired by books like Ian Nairn's *Modern Buildings in London*, we have always wanted to produce a guide book to accompany the website and now, with Unbound, we have the chance to do that. *A Guide to Modernism in Metro-Land* will accompany the reader through the suburbs of London and the Home Counties. The guide will cover nine London boroughs and two counties, with a map for each area, descriptions of each building and colour photographs. The guide also includes many wonderful art deco cinemas by the likes of George Coles, FE Bromige and Cecil Masey.

A Guide to Modernism in Metro-Land aims to be the 21st Century accompaniment to some of the finest 20th Century architecture of the suburbs. We feel that this is something members would be really interested in and we would like to offer them a special discount code if they pledge to support the book. In return for supporting this creative endeavour, they'd receive a Special Edition with their name printed in the Supporter List in the back of every copy. There are also some great rewards, such as artwork from the book. Please visit [unbound.com/books/a-guide-to-modernism-in-metro-land].

Josh Abbott

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9298zpw] Amazon have for sale at £7.99 an album of projector sound effects – 8mm, 16mm, 35mm, 70mm and others. You can buy individual tracks for 99p each!
- ★ [www.chestercinemas.co.uk] 13 Chester cinemas. Lots of other material and links to interesting pages.
- ★ [www.bn15.co.uk/history/cinema.html] History and photos of the Odeon and Luxor in Lancing (West Sussex)
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yd82u3fg] A page from the *Eastern Daily Telegraph* on 90 years of the Majestic Kings Lynn. Contains a 2min video.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yarckvnc] A page from the *New York Times* on Cinerama.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ya8dean9] A blog from Historic England: Pass the popcorn – a brief introduction to cinemas. *Sent in by John West.*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yc9xs6o8] A page from the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph*: The Savoy Burnley in 1953. *Sent in by Philip Crompton.*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9y6jrbe] A page from the *Lancashire Evening Telegraph*: Blackburn's old cinemas. *Sent in by Philip Crompton.*
- ★ [ealingcivicsociety.org/gallery] Has pictures of the Forum/ABC (etc) and the Walpole. *Sent in by Tony Williams.*
- ★ [www.theatretrust.org.uk/latest/planning-responses] Theatres Trust replies to planning applications. Scroll down to 4 January to see the letter about the State Grays. *Sent in by John West.*
- ★ [salles-cinema.com] Cinemas in France and Switzerland.
- ★ [vassallohistory.wordpress.com/cinemas-2] List of Maltese Cinemas, with pictures.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y7mh2ozt] Adelaide's (Australia) lost picture theatres part one – with a link to part two at the bottom of the page.
- ★ [sallesdecinemas.blogspot.co.uk] Cinema frontages, mostly in Paris. *Above four items sent in by Gavin McGrath.*

CINEMA BUSINESS

PRICE COMPARISON



There is a huge variation in prices to see the latest *Star Wars* film. In Kent, an adult couple would pay as much as £26.20 at the Cineworld in Ashford. The Odeon at Chatham charges £28.50 whereas at the Carlton Westgate-on-Sea it's £7 and £8 at the New Century in Sittingbourne, pictured above in April 2004.

Sheerness Times – 27 December

PRICES SLASHED

Vue has cut prices to £4.99 for every regular film, every day at 22 of its cinemas. This does not apply to 3D films, IMAX and VIP seating upgrades. There will also still be a 75p booking fee for online and telephone bookings. The cinemas are: Aberdeen, Barrow, Bury, Cheshire Oaks, Cleveleys, Darlington, Farnborough, Gateshead, Halifax, Hamilton, Hartlepool, Hull, Lancaster, Livingston, Manchester Lowry, Manchester Printworks, Norwich, Merthyr, Romford, Southport, Swansea, Thanet and York. The discount follows membership card schemes which are run by rival cinema chains Cineworld and Odeon, which allow customers unlimited visits for a monthly fee of almost £18.

Wales Online – 6 February

CINEWORLD TAKEOVER

The Greidinger family, the majority owner of Cineworld is to plough £500m into the £2.6bn takeover of USA chain Regal. More than 87% of shareholders have backed the takeover. The City was underwhelmed at the news and shares were down 27p or 4.8% to 536.5p. Cineworld posted an 11.6% rise in revenues. Retail sales overtook box-office with a 15.5% increase versus 10.3%.

Evening Standard – 17 January; *Daily Mail* – 3 February;
sent in by Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton

LIVING WAGE

Management at the Ritzy in Brixton, London, has threatened to lock out workers campaigning to be paid the official living wage. The union BECTU gave official notice of the strikes on 20 January and owners Picturehouse said they would close for two weeks. The campaign has been running for over ten years now.

Source and date unknown; sent in by Carl Chesworth

MOBILE CINEMA SECURES FUNDING

Regional Screen Scotland [RSS] has secured a grant of £620,350 to cover the period April 2018 to March 2021. Highlands and Islands Enterprise will also give a total of £75,000 over the same period. RSS operates the mobile cinema The Screen Machine, which tours the Highlands, Inner and Outer Hebrides and Northern Isles. The service was originally started in 1998. The current vehicle, which has been in use since 2005, was fully refurbished last year.

BBC News Website – 25 January

PRICIEST SHOW IN LONDON

West End musical *Hamilton* at the Victoria Palace Theatre has increased its top ticket price to £250, making it the most expensive show in London. The 25% hike applies to premium tickets for Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings from 30 July to 15 December 2018. The cheapest seats remain the same at £20.

The Stage – 8 February; sent in by Barry Quinton

CANCELLED VUE-ING

Vue cancelled a booking by Christian group Core Issues Trust to screen a film called *Voices of the Silenced* promoting therapies to 'cure' gay people. It was to be shown at the Vue Piccadilly [London] on Thursday 8 February. Vue stated the film was "in direct contradiction of its values".

Metro – 8 February; sent in by Allen Eyles

VUE IN SAUDI

On p33 of the last Bulletin we reported that a 35-year ban on cinemas in Saudi Arabia had been lifted. The first film to be shown was *The Emoji Movie*. No-one could blame the Saudis if they never wanted to watch another film again! Despite this, Vue has announced it will invest in 30 new cinemas across the country over the next three years, with the first before the end of 2018.

The Times, Metro – 13 February; *Evening Standard* – 15, 17 February;
sent in by Carl Chesworth, Elliot Griffiths & Tom Laughlan

ODEON FLOATATION

Odeon is close to naming banks as it prepares to float on the London Stock Exchange. Owner AMC is looking to offload Odeon shares worth around £500m. Although the floatation was tipped for 2019, City sources say it could be pulled forward.

Evening Standard – 17 January; sent in by Tom Laughlan

REALLY USEFUL SUNDAYS

On p33 of the last Bulletin we reported that "Orchestras have returned to cinemas." Now Really Useful Theatres is to screen films with a live orchestra at two of their London Theatres, the Theatre Royal Drury Lane and the London Palladium on Sundays, a traditionally 'dark' day for theatres. Both venues have a capacity in excess of 2,000. Drury Lane hosted two live-score performances of *Love Actually* in December, both of which sold out.

The Stage – 4 January; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

CHURCHILL SMOKING

The new film *The Darkest Hour* depicts Winston Churchill and his trademark smouldering cigar. Historians have criticised the end credits, which contain a disclaimer and a warning of "serious health risks" associated with smoking. Academics have suggested the credits should have a further line, "Sir Winston Churchill lived to be 90!"

Daily Telegraph – 26 December; sent in by Carl Chesworth

DYNAMIC PRICING

UCI GmbH, the German arm of AMC, has signed a five-year contract with Smart Price for dynamic pricing software at their 23 cinemas and 203 screens. It means that prices will be optimised for every single show automatically and in real-time, based on the show's forecasted demand and pre-sales. Moviegoers are rewarded for booking early with more attractive prices.

Mad Cornish Projectionist – 9 January

SING-ALONG SUCCESS

The Greatest Showman only made \$8.8m in its opening weekend in the USA. However its fortunes were revived as a 'sing-along' version was released, complete with subtitles and a goody bag; after five weeks it has made \$113m and was still playing in 3,000 USA screens in January. In Britain both Odeon and Cineworld cinemas and the Prince Charles in London's Leicester Square hold sing-along screenings. *BBC Breakfast* interviewed Ted Doan, manager of the Plaza Stockport, who said that sing-along screenings were very popular there. Audiences often come in costume.

The Times – 26 January

PEARL AND DEAN COMEBACK

Advertising company Pearl and Dean nearly doubled its profit before tax in 2016, up from £892,000 in 2015 to £1.8m. It employed 35 people in 2016, an increase of one on the previous year. It was founded in 1953 but bought by Scottish media group STV in 1999. It became trapped in a loss-making deal with Vue Cinemas and was sold for a token £1 in 2010 to a company backed by Irishman Tom Anderson, owner of the Empire Cinemas chain. This is a huge turnaround for the firm, which recorded a loss of £13m in 2009.

Sunday Business Post (Ireland) – 7 January

MISCELLANY

CALLING BLIGHTY



The New Victoria / Odeon Bradford in April 2013

The makers of a documentary about the New Victoria / Odeon in Bradford are seeking anyone who recalls messages sent from servicemen to loved ones, broadcast at the cinema 1944-1946. Film crews were sent to India and filmed men and women giving messages to loved ones. The film was then shipped back to England and families were invited to their local cinema to see them. The Channel 5 documentary, presented by Michael Portillo, will be part of a series about some of Britain's unusual and historic buildings. Researches also want to hear from anyone who was at the venue when The Beatles played there in 1963 and 1964. Please email [ed.wright@transparent.tv]

Telegraph & Argus, Bradford – 12 February; sent in by Carl Chesworth

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY SCREENINGS

What began as a pilot scheme around two years ago has spread to over 400 cinemas. Brightly patterned carpets are covered, as are mirrors, as both can be distressing for dementia sufferers. The films are specially tailored to the audience, with musicals especially popular. The volume is reduced and the lighting adjusted. The UK Cinema Association says that classic movies can stimulate memories and music is a powerful tool in reminiscence.

Sunday Telegraph – 14 January; sent in by Carl Chesworth

60 YEARS AGO IN MORECAMBE

When Peter Brough, the famous ventriloquist, was in the middle of his Sunday afternoon performance on the Central Pier, with his dummy Archie Andrews, the police moved in and summoned him for flagrant breaches of the Lord's Day Observance laws. Brough was fined £10. Even more annoyed were the 200 players who barracked the police after a raid on a tombola (bingo) game at the Classic theatre in 1959. A plain-clothes WPC had paid 3d for a card for a game; because of this the manager was fined £100 and the takings of £428 were confiscated. The game was deemed to involve no skill and was, therefore, gambling – then illegal. Nevertheless, not even Draconian magistrates could stop the rising tide of bingo. See Newsreel p23.

Sent in by Carl Chesworth

Editor's Note: I grew up in the area and don't remember a Classic Theatre in Morecambe in the 1950s. The Odeon didn't become the Classic cinema until 1967.

THE SADDEST CINEMA STORY

The BBC had a report on Russian ghost towns, one of which (Kadykchan in the far east) rapidly died when one mine ran out of coal and the other one had an explosion. It had a modern 300-seat cinema called the Kino Shakhtar – written KNHO WAXTEP in Cyrillic, which was only about two years old. From 1998 almost everyone left as there were not even shops to buy food in. The reporter is shown the ruins by a former projectionist, who said the cinema and other buildings were set fire to by the authorities, so they would present no more expense.

Martin Tapsell

END OF THE DUSTBIN LID?

Sky is to make all of its TV channels available on-line. The company said that this will give access to customers who can't have a satellite dish but they will continue broadcasting by satellite. With 90% of UK homes hooked up to the Internet, customers may choose to go dish-free.

Metro – 26 January; sent in by Thomas Laughlan

SAVE OUR THEATRES

The *Theatres at Risk* register lists 35 theatres across the country that are likely to be lost. Six of these venues are in London, including the Granada Walthamstow, the Coronet Elephant & Castle and the Streatham Hill Theatre (see below). The Hippodrome Brighton heads the list with the Theatre Royal Margate coming second. TV presenter Dara Ó Briain, a Theatres Trust trustee, has urged local authorities to take action. The list and a map can be downloaded from: [www.theatrustrust.org.uk/how-we-help/theatres-at-risk]

ITV News, Evening Standard – 23 January;

sent in by Tom Laughlan, John Pilblad, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

STREATHAM HILL THEATRE



There is a 'sleeping beauty' theatre waiting to be awoken in Streatham Hill. A unique gem, a lavish Grade II listed theatre, designed and built in the late 1920s for an audience of over 2,500 with a stage large enough to take the very biggest shows. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity – and maybe the very last chance – to revive the Streatham Hill Theatre aka Beacon Bingo. Opened in 1929 as Streatham Hill Playhouse, the theatre attracted big name stars (including John Gielgud and the newly-discovered Vivian Leigh) and big shows (either prior to their West End runs, or as transfers from the West End). It survived major bomb damage in 1944, being rebuilt and reopened in 1950. By 1962 the theatre succumbed to the downturn in theatre-going, closing briefly to be reopened by Mecca as Britain's biggest bingo venue. The building was left largely untouched by its switch to bingo, preserving the theatre in suspended animation. Since 2013 the building has hosted a number of popular theatre events run by Streatham Theatre Company, including performances and tours and gala nights run by Beacon Bingo, all of which have shown the usefulness of the building as a local venue and displayed the beauty and heritage of the theatre to the local community.

Bingo ceased in January 2017 and since then Praesepe plc, the owners of Beacon Bingo, have been seeking a new cultural use for the historic building. The local community, co-ordinated by the Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre, would like to see the theatre returned to arts and performance use, to provide a centre for Streatham's significant and growing arts and cultural activities. There is concern that the building may be lost to redevelopment, or that the more commercial parts of the building might be hived off, leaving the auditorium and theatre parts unsustainable. We feel that the whole building needs a single organisation in charge, to sustain the core arts and cultural use with revenue from food and drink, letting of studios and offices etc. The Friends have been in touch with the Theatres Trust, who are put the theatre on their 'At Risk' register for 2018 and the ABTT Historical Research Committee, who have been investigating the building's unique heritage. We also have the support of the Streatham Society and local councillors. We are also talking with our local MP Chukka Umunna and LB Lambeth.

If you would like to help please join the Friends' mailing list via our website and follow us on Facebook or Twitter.

[sht@qaz.me.uk] [sht.qaz.me.uk] [twitter.com/StreathamHillT]
[facebook.com/streathamhilltheatre]

David Harvey, Friends of Streatham Hill Theatre

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

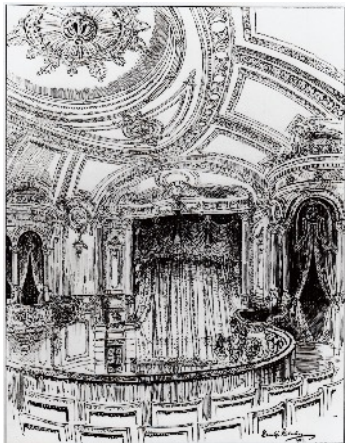


Illustration from the opening programme, 18 March 1913, held in the Archive.



105 years ago:

West End (Rialto) 3 Coventry Street, London. Opened 18 March 1913. Architect Hippolyte Blanc. Grade II listed. Above, left.

90 years ago:

Picture House (Cinema/Regal/Magic Lantern Theatre/Savoy) 18 Church Street, Monmouth. Opened 5 March 1928. Architect unknown. Grade II listed. Above, right.

80 years ago:



Odeon Clarence Place, Newport (Wales). Opened 12 March 1938. Architects Arthur J Price/Harry Weedon. Grade II listed.



Riddrie (Vogue) 726 Cumberland Street, Riddrie, Glasgow. Opened 20 March 1938. Architect James McKissock. B-listed.

ARCHIVE

ARCHIVE ENQUIRIES

The Archive is in temporary accommodation and this makes it hard to receive visitors and to deal with enquiries quickly. We cannot access all of the material as some remains boxed up. Please make enquiries in the normal way via the enquiry form on the website or by emailing [archive@cta-uk.org] and we will do our best to deal with these as soon as we can.

To arrange to visit the Archive, first complete the enquiry form detailing your interest and why you would like to visit. If the material you want to see is accessible we will then book you a visit and help you find your way to us in Bow, East London. You will need to have a mobile phone to contact us on arrival, to be let into the building or agree a set time of arrival to then be collected from the reception area.

ARCHIVE OPPORTUNITIES

The CTA Archive can offer members an excellent opportunity to contribute towards preserving our cinema heritage. Whether it be putting your particular skills to good use or just giving some of your spare time, there are plenty of opportunities within our friendly environment and you might learn something new along the way!

Please email [archive@cta-uk.org].

HELP THE ARCHIVE IDENTIFY CINEMAS

Brian Hall posts regular weekly sets of unidentified cinema photographs on the CTA-UK Yahoo! Group. Please consider joining this group [movies.groups.yahoo.com/group/cta-uk] and help us to identify cinemas. It's great fun!

SENDING DONATIONS BY POST OR EMAIL

We are always keen to receive donated material and can accept this in different formats. Of course, we always prefer to have originals. If however you cannot part with the material, then we are happy to accept scanned material or copies of your digital photographs.

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Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

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.

OBITUARIES

ANTHONY RICHARD DUGGAN

2 February 1954 – 20 September 2017

Long serving CTA member, Tony Duggan, passed away on 2 September 2017 following a battle with cancer. The beloved husband and father is survived by his wife Helen, daughter Fern and son Sam.

Tony was a member of the CTA for a number of years. He attended many CTA visits and was known as the friendly giant, being tall and having a heart of gold. When Tony left school he went to work for London Underground and spent many happy years working at the Central Line maintenance depot at West Ruislip. He loved his work and was well liked by all his colleagues and would often tell a story or two about his work – recently boasting that he had wired the current Bakerloo Line trains when they had first been introduced on the system and that he must have done a good job as they were still going strong 45 years later! Tony was also an active member of the London Underground Railway Society.

Tony really loved cinemas and would go out of his way to visit a cinema, attend a last night, even if it was a fleapit – he had so many stories, always humorous! He did have a soft spot for the art deco Ace Cinema in Rayners Lane and he helped out there during the late 70s / early 80s to ensure the place kept running and assisted in updating the CTA with developments after the cinema's closure, keen to ensure it got the listed status it deserved. Not content with visiting cinemas, Tony even converted his garage (having previously restored old cars) into a six-seater cinema! More recently Tony became very interested with the expanding Everyman circuit. He became a 'Gold Member' and quickly got to know the staff at many of their London cinemas, seeing films and restoration work.

Tony will be sadly missed.

Mike Speed

GORDON MILLER

Gordon Miller, who was instrumental in saving the Electric Palace in Harwich from demolition in 1972, died recently, passing away peacefully in his sleep.

Gordon was a dynamic, charismatic, lateral thinker, teacher and achiever, who in 1972 happened to be in exactly the right place at exactly the right time. There is no doubt that his initial recognition of the significance of the Electric Palace saved this important building and made possible its future survival as one of very few outstanding examples of its kind. It started when he brought a large group of students from the Kingston Polytechnic Schools of Architecture, Planning, 3D Design, Film & TV and Graphic Design to the town in 1972 to do a Town Study – this and what it led to was very well documented in *Picture House* number 37 in 2012 – thanks to Allen Eyles; this edition is still available.

Gordon was an Honorary Friend of the Electric Palace and over the years we would look forward to regular very interesting telephone conversations about the Electric Palace and his many other projects especially the unique Chain Bridge over the Tweed, with which he was still involved right to the end. One of Gordon's recent ideas was his brain-wave suggestion that we reinstate the long-lost Finial on the pediment of the Electric Palace frontage as part of the restoration programme. It has been costed at approximately £5,000 and we are now working on raising this sum. In view of his passing this would be a very appropriate recognition of his part in the cinema's history.

Chris Strachan

Photos [R]: A 1912 postcard of the Electric Palace, showing the missing finial; Gordon up a ladder unveiling a *Save Britain's Heritage* plaque at the Electric Palace in 1977.



MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome from all in the CTA to the following new members, who are listed in order of joining: Jane Giles, William Fowler, Diane Burstein, Roderick Langsford, Paul Bennett, Michael Henderson and Colin Pinfold.

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

We have welcomed three annual members to the rank of Life Membership in the past few weeks. They are Peter A Wilcox, who joined the CTA in 1987, Christopher Snowden, who joined the CTA in 1973 and Russell J McDonald, who joined the CTA in 1998.

DONATIONS

Grateful and sincere thanks are extended to these members who added a donation to their subscription renewals: DA Abbott, KR Bailey, DR Barker, DR Bennett, PJ Bennett, W Burns, B Campbell, GH Catterick, AJ Caygill, SA Christie, IC Cooper, NA Corbett, DA Cox, R Deahl, H Dupré, VA Edwards, ML Facey, KJ Finch, M Ford, JR Forster, GW Gill, RJ Gillings, G Greaves, RC Gurd, H Hamblet, M James, C Jennings, RO Jones, AP Jowett, AS King, PA Kirner, RS Laugharne, AC Llewellyn, AJ Marston, DJ McIntyre, JJ McWilliams, MA Ostler, TA O'Sullivan, N Pemberton, R Pilbeam, S Quick, DJ Reeves, PD Regan, TJ Rhodes, HR Rowley, RA Sales, HA Scott, TR Sedgwick-Jell, CB Simmonds, BJ Steer, C Syner, P Tipping, CW Turner, PJ Walters, JW Williams, JHC Williams and PG Yaxley.

IN MEMORIAM

The return of the last Bulletin to us brought the news of the death of Derek T Swaffer of Ramsgate, who had died on 27 October 2017 at the age of 84. He joined the CTA in 1990.

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)

This legislation comes into effect on 25 May 2018 and is a regulation that requires businesses to protect the personal data and privacy of EU citizens for transactions that occur within EU member states. The CTA has, for many years, been registered with the Information Commissioner as a data user. Specifically the data processed about members is for the purpose of managing their subscription to the CTA and therefore includes name, address, phone number and e-mail address. Also recorded are payments received and whether these are eligible for a GiftAid claim to be made. This is the only personal information on file and no record is kept of bank or credit card accounts etc.

However the regulations require that the permission of individuals should be obtained in a positive way and therefore members receiving renewal forms from the next issue of the CTA Bulletin will find a suitable declaration to this effect to be signed. The application and renewal pages on the CTA website will also need to collect this information in a positive way.

Members are reminded that the information in the membership database is not disclosed to other organisations or individuals. If a member wishes to make contact with another member whose address is unknown, please write a letter, enclosed in a stamped envelope with the name of the target person and send them to the membership secretary for forwarding.

Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary



REMEMBER THIS?

P323 ORACLE 323 Tue25 Dec LON 1830:10 1/6

THE MAIN EVENT CINEMA

WEST END AND INDEPENDENTS
to 3rd January

ABC Bayswater: 229 4149

1. Gremlins (13)
2. La Balance (18)
3. The Company of Wolves (18)

ABC Edgware Road, W2: 723 5901

1. Gremlins (15)
2. 1984 (15)
3. A Christmas Story (PG)
4. Splash (PG)

ABC Fulham Road, SW10: 370 2636

1. Gremlins (15)
2. Dune (PG)
3. The Killing Fields (15)
4. Give My Regards to Broadstreet (PG)
5. Hotel New Hampshire (18)

ABC Shaftesbury Avenue: 836 8861

1. Once Upon A Time In America (18)
2. Gremlins (15)

P323 ORACLE 323 Tue25 Dec LON 1831:10 4/6

THE MAIN EVENT CINEMA

WEST END AND INDEPENDENTS
to 3rd January

Empire, Leicester Square: 437 1234

1. Dune (PG)
2. Indiana Jones (PG)

FilmCenta Cinema, Charing X Rd: 437 4815

1. Diva (15)/Merry Xmas Mr Lawrence (11)
2. Local Hero/Loose Connections (PG)
3. Gregory's Girl (PG)

Gate Bloomsbury: 837 8402

1984 (13)

Gate Notting Hill: 221 0220

1. Le Bal (PG)
2. Ring for details

Leicester Square Theatre: 930 5252

The Last Starfighter (PG)

[mord >](#)
[EATING OUT IN LONDON? CHECK WITH THE RESTAURANT GUIDE ON PAGE 356](#)

P323 ORACLE 323 Tue25 Dec LON 1810:01 2/6

THE MAIN EVENT CINEMA

WEST END AND INDEPENDENTS to 3rd JanN
Some closfd 24th, 25thN Phone for details.

Academy Cinema, 165 Oxford St: 437 2981

1. Kaos (15)
2. The Home And The World (U)
3. Les Enfants Du Paradis (PG)

Camden Parkway, NW1: 482 2232

Ghostbusters (PG)

Camden Plaza: 485 2443

Full Moon in Paris (15)

Chelsea Cinema, King's Rd: 351 3742

Full Moon In Paris (15)

Cinecenta Panton Street: 930 0631

1. The Company of Wolves (18)
2. 101 Dalmations (U)
3. Hotel New Hampshire (18)
4. Give My Regards to Broad Street (PG)

[more follows >](#)

P323 ORACLE 323 Tue25 Dec LON 1830:11 5/6

THE MAIN EVENT CINEMA

WEST END AND INDEPENDENTS
to 3rd January

Odeon, Haymarket: 930 2738

A Private Function (15)

Odeon, Kensington: 602 6644

1. Ghostbusters (PG)
2. The Last Starfighter (PG)
3. The Woman In Red (15)
4. 1984 (15)

Odfon, Leicester Square: 930 6111

Ghostbusters (PG)

Odeon, Marble Arch: 723 2011

Caravan of Courage (U)

Plaza, Lower Regent Street: 437 1234

1. Jungle Book (U)
2. 1984 (15)
3. A Christmas Story (PG)

[CONCORDIA ITALIAN RISTORANTE LONDON RESTAURANT GUIDE - page 356](#)

P323 ORACLE 323 Tue25 Dec LON 1822:01 3/6

THE MAIN EVENT CINEMA

WEST END AND INDEPENDENTS
to 3rd January (closed evdnhng 24th and all day 25th)

Classic, Haymarket: 839 1527

1. Gremlins (11)
2. Maria's Lovfrs (15)
3. A Christmas Carol (U)

Classic, Oxford Street: 636 0310

1. Give My Regards To Broad Street (PG)
2. Stop Making Sensf (PG)
3. Ninja III The Domination (18)
4. A Christmas Carol (U)
5. Broadway Danny Rose (PG)

Classic Royal, Charing X Rd: 930 6915

Superman, Superman II, Superman III

Classic, Tottenham Court Rd: 636 6148

1. The Killing Fields (15)
2. The Company of Wolves (18)

[more follows >](#)

P323 ORACLE 323 Tue25 Dec LON 1810:11 6/6

THE MAIN EVENT CINEMA

WEST END AND INDEPENDENTS
to 3rd January

Scenes, Swiss Centre, Leicester Square: 439 4446

1. Midnight Express (18)
2. Maitresse (18)
3. Night Nurses on the Job (18)
4. Conan The Destroyer (15)

Screen on Baker Street: 935 2772

1. Cal 2N Paris, Texas (15)

Times Centa, Baker StN: 935 9772

1. The Rocky Horror Picture Show (15)
2. Spinal Tap (15)

Warner, gN End, Leicester Sq: 439 0791

1. Cal (15)
2. Gremlins (15)
3. Tightrope (18)
4. Killing Fields
5. Police Academy (13)

[more follows >](#)

Pages from TELETEXT in 1984 showing London cinema listings.
More at [\[archive.teletextart.co.uk\]](http://archive.teletextart.co.uk)
some examples to right →

Sent in by Gavin McGrath

