



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

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The two-screen Tower Skegness, which has had a £500,000 refurbishment; photo taken May 2004



The Regent at Redcar (Cleveland), which has been forced to close due to structural problems; photo taken June 2006

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Thank you all for continuing to send items for the Bulletin. I have more room for holiday snaps this time. I still have a few in stock but I could always do with more – don't forget to photograph any fine-looking cinemas whilst you are on holiday, especially in interesting locations.

This Bulletin is a bit thinner than of late. I have a few small articles held over but I didn't want to put too many similar pieces together. As I write this, the heatwave is in full swing and I know we would all rather be outside than sitting in front of a word processor – although I know some of you still use manual typewriters or even quill pens. Still, an article or two would be welcome. Please try to include photos.

From time to time I get press cuttings about buildings that are purely theatres. I will put them in if I have space but please don't be disappointed if I'm unable to include them. Everything gets sent to the Archive after I'm finished with it, anyway.

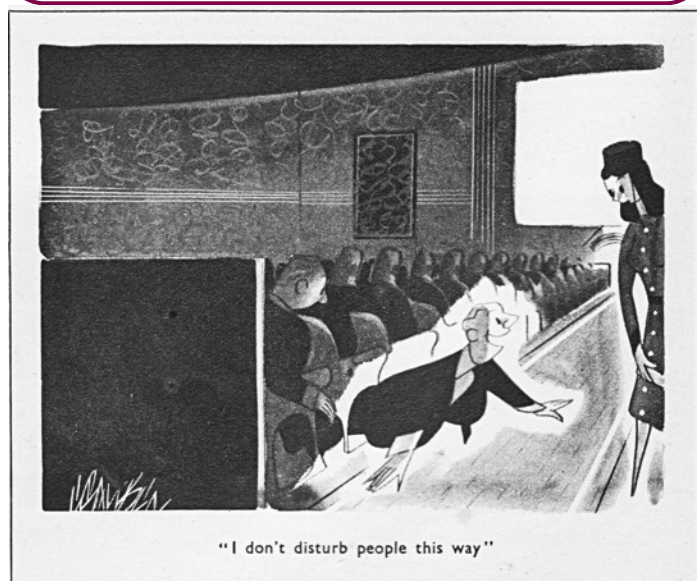


In May we went to Norfolk. We did the 'tour' of the Queen's house at Sandringham [above]. Not cheap but very interesting. The guide said that the ballroom spends much of its time as a cinema. Up in the Minstrels' Gallery is a curtained-off area, which we were told houses two projectors, "similar to those you would have found in a small town cinema", a gift of the Rank Organisation. Presumably they are a pair of Kalees. The guide didn't know any more – do any of you out there?

By the way, did you notice the seaside theme in the two photos I chose for the front cover? Talking of holidays, I am away for the whole of September. Therefore the deadline for the next edition [Sept/Oct] will have to be absolutely rigid. I'm afraid I won't be able to process anything that arrives after Wednesday 20 August. Happy holidays.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

CARTOON CORNER



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

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
WEDNESDAY 20 AUGUST**

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor.

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

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

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

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

Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby

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VISITS AND EVENTS

CTA Annual General Meeting 2018 Saturday 28 July

This year's AGM will be part of a visit to Hull, UK City of Culture in 2017. The AGM will be held at 1:30pm for 2pm on Saturday 28 July at Kardomah 94 on Alfred Gelder Street in Hull City centre. Nominations for committee members are invited and should be sent to the Secretary, Adam Unger (address on p2) to arrive seven days before the meeting. The minutes of last year's meeting will be distributed on the day and are available now in the members' area of the CTA website. There is no charge for members attending just the AGM.

Getting there: The AGM venue in Alfred Gelder Street is about a 12 minute walk from Hull Paragon Station. There are direct train services to Hull from many parts of the country including London.

Apollo's Birthday Celebration and more... Mon 27 – Wed 29 August Organised by David Eve and Nick Taylor



I hope all members who kindly expressed an interest in this event have received a booking form, but there still may be room for those who wish to join us.

The Apollo Manchester staff are very enthusiastic about our visit on 29 August, but I'm still trying to get access to some other interesting venues on the 27th and 28th. I can confirm that we will be staying at our base hotel, the Holiday Inn Express, Stockport, a brand new hotel next door to Stockport train station on the main London Euston to Manchester rail line. Members booking a rail tickets should however book a return ticket to Manchester as we will end the trip there.

Monday 27 August is a Bank Holiday so we would ask members to get to Stockport by 15:00 and we will hopefully include a visit to the new Light Cinema there with an evening visit to the Plaza Stockport.

I'm planning a coach trip on Tuesday hopefully to Liverpool with stops on the way and we will be in Greater Manchester on Wednesday morning. Our visit to the Apollo will begin at 12:30 with a lunch and then we will have a few hours to explore the building, see some film and cut a celebration cake to mark this amazing old cinema's 80th birthday.

The trip will formally end at the Apollo, so members travelling by train will be able to depart Manchester Piccadilly by 16:00.

There is an option for local members to attend the Apollo visit on its own and this is included on the booking form. Although the Apollo Management have given us the building on the day there has been materials expense by the CTA in trying to get the projectors working, so there will be a charge for those who want to attend the Apollo visit only as well as an amount included in the fee for those attending the whole event.

**Most visits are for members only
details in the full Bulletin**

CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II*

It was revealed in April that the Electric Palace in Harwich had been awarded £653,000 of National Lottery funding towards the cinema's repair and refurbishment. It was scheduled to close in May for a nine month period of rehabilitation. See p26 last Bulletin. {2597}

Historic England is engaging pro-actively in proposals for the future of the Palace in Southall; an assessor has inspected the property and agreed that its exterior requires essential maintenance. Another official of the body is to visit in order to ascertain if it merits inclusion on its Heritage at Risk Register. Concurrently a Design and Heritage Statement has been commissioned by the owner. See p5 last Bulletin.

Grade II

It has been disclosed that the Grand at Westbourne may become a hostelry in the JD Wetherspoon chain of such establishments. If this transpires it is to be hoped that the building is treated with the sympathetic approach accorded many of the company's earlier cinema conversions, which regrettably has been markedly lacking in certain of its recent projects. See p6 Bulletin 51/5. {22430}



The interior of the Hyde Park Picture House Leeds in June 2010

Concern arises apropos the latest set of design drawings relating to the proposed upgrade work to the Hyde Park Picture House in Leeds. A further site visit has been offered at which a further attempt to ameliorate the perceived injurious impact to the building will be made.



The Savoy Burnt Oak in September 2006

The Savoy in Burnt Oak is to be assessed for inclusion on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. {13831}

More Casework in the full Bulletin

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. A list of their contents was printed on p4 of Bulletin 52/2 or can be obtained by SAE or email from the Sales Officer or Bulletin Editor.

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.



ABC and Gaumont reprints

There are just a few copies left of these reprinted circuit histories, priced £17.50 each or £30 for the two. Postage £3.00 extra.

Recently Published (details in previous Bulletins)

From Projectors to Preachers

Cinemas that became Churches by Gavin McGrath.

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

The Cinemas of West Wales

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

£6.99 plus postage.

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.

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.

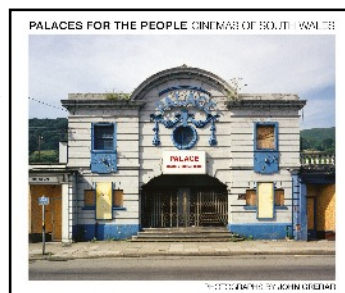
Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

Palaces for The People – Cinemas of South Wales

by John Crerar. 55 photographic plates, 80 pages paperback

£15 including postage from 2Ten Books (www.2tenbooks.com)

In 1996 documentary photographer John Crerar embarked on a project taking large format photographs of the cinema buildings of South Wales. He also interviewed some of the infinite numbers of people who passed through their doors. Some 20 years later John has revisited the sites and re-photographed the cinemas or, if they have been demolished, the spaces they once inhabited. The result is this book, which features 55 photographs, an essay on South Wales cinemas and extracts from interviews on cinema-going in the 1920s. Members who attended last year's South Wales tour after the AGM may recall visiting an exhibition of some of these photographs in Abertillery.



A **MUST** for your collection

CINEMAS IN BRITAIN

A History of Cinema Architecture

by Richard Gray

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

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

Special price for CTA members

£29.50 + £6.00 postage from

Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer

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

MISCELLANY

CINEMA STATISTICS

The number of cinema sites in Britain has grown from 727 to 766 over the past decade. Screen numbers are up 18% to 4,150.

The Guardian – 14 April

EU RULES OK?

If new EU lighting regulations are brought in in September 2020, it is feared that shows like *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* at the Palace Theatre would have to close. The producer claims that replacement LED technology isn't up to scratch – it is inflexible, hard to dim and gives a harsh quality of light. "It may be that one day advances in technology will allow for the change but meanwhile we are light years away from that being the case."

Evening Standard – 22 May; sent in by Tom Laughlan

BUGS FOUND IN CINEMA DRINKS

Tests commissioned by BBC programme *Watchdog Live* revealed unacceptable bacteria levels in fizzy drinks sold at Cineworld, Odeon and Vue cinemas. The programme visited ten branches of each chain, testing the seat fabric, cup holders, a fizzy drink and ice cubes for bacteria. One drink contained 10,000 times what is considered acceptable; salmonella was also present. Many were associated with poor toilet hygiene. The chains replied that they have stringent cleaning procedures.

Evening Standard – 9 May; *Daily Telegraph* – 10 May;
sent in by Carl Chesworth & Tom Laughlan

POSTER AUCTION

An on-line auction of 400 rare cinema posters was held on 28 June. Lots were on display at the Odeon BFI IMAX in London from 22-28 June. They included (with estimated sale prices): *Goldfinger* UK Quad Poster (1964) £4,000 - £6,000; *Dracula AD 1972* UK Quad Poster Artwork (1972) £6,000 - £8,000; *The Dam Busters* UK Quad Poster (1955) £6,000 - £8,000 and *Star Wars* US Teaser "B" 7-Sheet Poster (1977) £10,000 - £15,000. The results are not known. [tinyurl.com/ya6xo3tb]

Sent in by Geoff Gill

UNDERGROUND FILMS

Films are being shown in some underground locations. The tunnel under the Thames at the Brunel Museum in Rotherhithe (East London) is showing three of the best adventure films once a week in July and August – admission £25. Food and drink are optional extras. In May a season of films was shown in the caves underneath Notting-ham Castle.

Sent in by Terry Hanstock & Philip Stevens

CHARITY INVESTIGATION



A church exposed as offering gay 'cure' therapies is under investigation over "potential significant" financial losses. The Charity Commission announced it was looking into Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries International (MFM), which has branches across east London, one of which is in the foyer of the former Princess cinema in Dagenham. The auditorium was demolished in 2003. {13744}

Islington Gazette – 8 June; photo taken July 2006

WHAT DUMMIES!

A Bollywood film crew sparked an air and sea rescue by throwing a mannequin off cliffs at Beachy Head. A helicopter responded to calls of a body falling over the cliffs, near Eastbourne and a lifeboat recovered the dummy.

Metro – 18 May; sent in by Barry Quinton

SUITABLE HONOUR FOR ORGANIST OF NOTE

The appreciation society for organist John Mann [78], which started in 1981, has raised £500 to place a window with John's name at Worthing Pier. He has played summer shows in Worthing and Eastbourne for over 30 years.

The Argus, Brighton – 22 May; sent in by Barry Quinton

MUSICALS BAN

English National Opera has banned musical theatre audiences from bringing food and drink to the London Coliseum because patrons have been "picnicking" and "replacing water with gin and vodka". The ban, which also applies to rock and pop concerts, is not imposed on opera, dance, cinema and classical performances, where soft drinks and confectionery are still permitted. However, there are moves to extend the ban to all genres of productions.

The Stage – 10 May; sent in by Barry Quinton

CHILDREN SHOWN 'SCARY' TRAILER

Parents were yelling at the projectionist to stop, when a trailer for horror film *Hereditary* was accidentally shown before a screening of *Beatrix Potter* at the Event cinema in Innaloo, Perth, Western Australia. The cinema eventually switched off the projector and later offered complimentary tickets as a sign of goodwill. This is not the first time this has been reported as happening; previous incidents have occurred in London, Florida and California.

The Guardian – 27 April; sent in by Carl Chesworth

FIGHT BREAKS OUT AT NATIONAL THEATRE

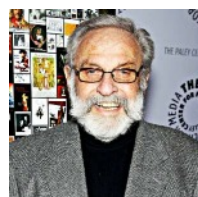
A performance of *Julie* at the National Theatre in London was disrupted in its final moments after two audience members became embroiled in a fight. The incident follows a fight at London's Old Vic last year in which an audience member was punched by another after challenging him about using a mobile phone.

The Stage – 7 June; sent in by Barry Quinton

NECROLOGY

BILL GOLD 97

Bill was the graphic designer responsible for many of the most memorable film posters of the past 60 years, including *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), *My Fair Lady* (1964) and *All The President's Men* (1976). Among the directors he worked for were Alfred Hitchcock (*Dial M for Murder* 1954) and Clint Eastwood, for whom he designed some 30 posters.



PETER BYRNE 90

Probably best known for playing policeman Andy Crawford in *Dixon of Dock Green* for two decades from 1955. He also played Derek in *Bread*. His cinema appearances included small roles in *Reach for the Sky* (1956) as well as one as a bridegroom in *Carry On Cabby* (1963).



EUNICE GAYSON 90

The first ever Bond girl, who played Sylvia Trench in *Dr No*. She was the first to say the line, "Bond, James Bond" although her voice was dubbed.



MARGOT KIDDER 69

Played Lois Lane opposite Christopher Reeve in the 1978 *Superman* film and its three sequels. She was unable to work for two years following a serious car accident in 1990 but refused to believe in the 'Superman' curse, which was blamed for misfortunes that befell those involved in the film.



REWINDING BACK

Sent in by David A Ellis

NEW PICTURE HOUSE, ARBROATH



The Picture House Arbroath in September 2006

The New Picture House in Arbroath opened on Christmas day 1930 with the film *Chasing Rainbows*. The opening ceremony was by the Lord Provost, Sir William Chapel JP. Opening prices were one shilling and threepence, one shilling, ninepence and sixpence. There was seating for 1,036 with around 300 occupying the balcony. Projection was provided by Kalee equipment with Western Electric Sound. Access to the projection area was not from inside the building. Heating was supplied by gas radiators and a Keith Blackman system of ventilation continuously changed the air. Local firm William Morrison carried out the plaster and cement work. It was stated that the auditorium had wide aisles and there was no cramping. It went on to say that the building can be emptied either to the High Street or to Hill Place, at the rear, in a few minutes. [23217]

Courier & Advertiser – 23 December 1930

MANAGERIAL CHANGES AT BURNLEY REGAL AND ALHAMBRA

The interesting announcement is made that Mr PJH Cobb, the former assistant manager of the Savoy cinema, has been appointed manager of the Regal Picture Hall. A further change is announced in connection with the Alhambra, where Mr WJ Wright has been appointed manager. They will be pleased to welcome both old and new patrons at their respective cinemas. As from 28 December, the Alhambra will revert to three separate performances daily at 2:30, 6:30 and 8:45, at the following reduced prices of admission, which include tax: afternoons, all stalls 4d, balcony 5d; evenings, stalls 4d & 6d, balcony 7d; seats booked for balcony 9d.

Burnley News – 23 December 1931

OPERATORS' VIEWS

Colonel WCC Gell, on behalf of the Birmingham Court of the Guild of British Cinematograph Projectionists and Technicians (to which organisation a considerable percentage of operators in the City belong) emphasised the importance of its being a definite condition that an operator that an operator should not be employed on more than one Sunday in four. To them, a weekday off was not adequate compensation for the loss of a Sunday. Some operators might find themselves in the awkward position of being told that if they were not prepared to work two Sundays a month they could find a job elsewhere. He thought the Exhibitors' Association would have to recognise that they would need a pool of operators to carry on Sunday opening.

Birmingham Daily Gazette – 18 November 1932

LONDON PAVILION TO BE MODERN CINEMA.

Completely reconstructed internally, the London Pavilion Theatre will be reopened as a modern cinema next Wednesday. This is another stage in the history of this famous old house of entertainment. Its greatest days were in the eighteen nineties when Arthur Roberts, Dan Leno, Little Tich, Vesta Tilley, Chirgwin, Eugene Stratton, Gus Elen, Harry Lauder, Marie Lloyd, Vesta Victoria, George Robey and many other famous artists appeared.

Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror – 31 August 1934

CINEMA CEILING COLLAPSE

During an afternoon performance at the Tatler News Cinema in Liverpool yesterday, part of the ceiling near the screen collapsed and six members of the audience were struck over the head by pieces of plaster. The lights were turned on and the performance stopped. The injured people were taken to the Northern Hospital, where three were detained. After the ceiling had been inspected by the Fire Brigade to see whether the building was free from danger, the performance was continued. Alderman Edwin Haigh, one of the proprietors of the cinema, said the accident was not a serious one and they were carrying on. There was no panic.

Yorkshire Post – 3 April 1934

FILM RENTERS CLAIM AGAINST PROPRIETORS

Messrs Loader and Beanland, cinema proprietors of the Pavilion Cleveleys (Lancs) were sued at Westminster County Court today by Butcher's Film Service Ltd, film renters of Wardour Street, London, for £9, the estimated percentage on net takings lost by the plaintiffs through non-fulfilment of a contract to exhibit certain films. It was stated that the films were not exhibited and the cinema was closed in March. For the plaintiffs it was stated that the claim was based on the receipt figures of similar cinemas. Judge Dumas; "Where is Cleveleys? Is it a seaside place?" "It is near Blackpool." was the reply. Judge Dumas: "Then the cinema was probably in competition with greater productions, though on wet nights people might sooner go there than Blackpool. If you choose to enter into contacts with no guarantee as to minimum payment you are in great difficulty if it is left to a cinema that finds its prosperity dwindling. However, the defendants have not chosen to come and defend the action." Judgement was given for the amount claimed and costs.

Lancashire Evening Post – 11 October 1934

ELITE CINEMA MANAGING DIRECTOR DIES

News was received in Nottingham today of the death of Mr Walter Bentley, managing director of the Elite Picture Theatre (Nottingham) Ltd, which occurred in London early today. His passing will be regretted by the many friends he made during the two years he lived in Nottingham. He had been ill only a few days. Mr Bentley, who controlled a number of cinemas, was 59 and had been connected with the stage and agency business for over 40 years. He started as a comedian but as his agency business grew, so he abandoned his turn. He was very interested in racing and owned several horses. Among the entertainment houses in regard to which Mr Bentley occupied the position of managing director, besides the Nottingham Elite were the Elite Middlesbrough, Scala Middlesbrough, Central Folkestone, Playhouse Folkestone and the Luxor Eastbourne. It was in 1924 that Mr Bentley became managing director of the Elite, shortly after the cinema had been reconstructed. He was invited by the directors to take the position and it was due to his enterprise and foresight that the house became one of the premier entertainment houses in the City. Today the flag floated at half-mast over the Elite.

Nottingham Evening Post – 12 September 1935

COMPETITION PRICE DROPS

To coincide with the opening of the new Odeon in Horsham, the Union Kinema Company announces changes at the four halls controlled by them. Price reductions have been made at the Carfax and the Winter Gardens. The Capitol is to present kiné-variety programmes and may well-known acts having been booked. This week at the Capitol, Archie and his Juvenile Band form the attraction. At the Ritz, Harold Ramsey, broadcasting organist, is performing daily. The new Odeon, opened last night by Earl Winterton, has AN Beadle as its manager. At the opening performance, Jack Payne and his band appeared.

The Stage – 8 October 1936

IN THE NICK OF TIME

Only sixteen minutes before it was due to be opened this morning by the Mayor (Alderman T Summerbell) Sunderland's newest cinema The Regent at Grangetown had no licence. In the rush of preparing the hall for the opening, the most important point of all had been overlooked. A special meeting of the town's Watch committee was hurriedly summoned at 10:30 am and in fifteen minutes it had completed the necessary formalities and the licence was granted. At 11am the Mayor appeared on the stage to perform the opening. It was said that

the magistrate would like it to be known that this is not to be taken as a precedent. Regulations are made to be carried out, not broken. The application was made in the name of Mr Thomas Thompson, by Mr S Hannay, solicitor, of South Shields, who apologised for not giving the required fourteen days' notice, explaining that in the rush of completing the cinema for today's opening, the matter was overlooked. I ask you to dispense with the notice, added Mr Hannay, saying that his client intended no discourtesy and was always anxious to comply with the law in every way.

Sunderland Daily Echo & Shipping Gazette – 31 May 1937

QUEEN MARY AT CINEMA OPENING

Queen Mary will attend the World Première of *The Great Barrier*, the Gaumont-British film on Canada, which will be given in aid of the Safer Motherhood Appeal, at the opening of the Gaumont Haymarket on 4 February. The *Capitol*, which formerly stood on this site, has been transformed into a luxurious house. It will seat 1,300, as compared with the *Capitol's* 1,550. Another Gaumont Palace, at Regent's Park, will be opened on 23 January.

The Era – 13 January 1937

STEEL FOR TWELVE ODEONS

A large and representative audience gathered at Warrington's newest cinema, the Odeon, on Monday evening, when it was officially opened by Sir Peter and Lady Rylands, supported by the Mayor of Warrington (Councillor Turner Cooper JP) and the Mayoress, Miss Cooper. Sir Peter Rylands gave a hearty welcome to the Odeon and during the course of his remarks said that the contract had been given to Warrington to supply the steel for a dozen more Odeon theatres in various parts of the country. WC Elcock, one of the directors, paid a tribute to the way in which the local authorities had cooperated with the builders. After bouquets had been presented to Lady Rylands and the Mayoress, a collection was taken for the Infirmary. The Band of the 15/19 The King's Royal Hussars gave a musical interlude while the feature film was *East Meets West* starring George Arliss. After the performance a reception was held in the auditorium and there was dancing on stage.

The Era – 13 January 1937

SUPPORT FOR CINEMA PROJECTIONISTS

The cinema strike was taken a stage further today when nearly fifty electricians at the Gainsborough Film Studios, Islington, London, ceased work in sympathy with the strike of projectionists in London, Manchester and Hull. Work on the spy film *Lost Lady*, which is being directed by Alfred Hitchcock, was held up and more than 200 people, including Paul Lukas, the Hollywood actor, Margaret Lockwood and Dame May Whitty had a day of enforced idleness in consequence. An official of Gainsborough Pictures told a *Sunderland Echo* representative, "We are prepared to stop production until the men come to their senses and return to work." Meanwhile, the picketing of cinemas in the affected districts continues but has not resulted in the closing of any halls or had even a slight effect on business.

Sunderland Echo – 19 April 1938

BIRMINGHAM CINEMAS TO CLOSE AT NINE

All theatres, music halls, cinemas and public dance halls in Birmingham will close at 9pm from tomorrow. This decision was reached at a conference of the interests concerned with the Public Entertainments Committee this afternoon. It applies to suburban as well as 'in-town' cinemas. New hours of closing were fixed for one month; the position will then be reviewed in the light of war developments. Licences for places of entertainment will now run from 10am instead of noon, as at present. Sunday hours for cinemas are to be 3pm to 8pm.

Evening Despatch – 2 December 1940

23 CINEMAS TO BECOME MUSIC HALLS

Twenty three cinemas, comprising the Buxton Theatre Circuit, are to become Music Halls. The turn-over from films to revues, variety and road shows has been decided by Mr Harry Buxton of the Gaiety theatre in Manchester, owner of the Buxton circuit. It is understood that Mr Buxton was so impressed by the support he received from the public when he staged a pantomime at King's Lynn (Norfolk) that he felt there was a big future for the music hall in the provinces. The first changes will be made at the Pilot King's Lynn, the Scala and the Gaiety Manchester, the Palace Burnley, the Riviera Tynemouth [sic], the Empire Bradford, the Regal cinemas at Bolton, Blackburn and Grantham, the Queen's Ashton-under-Lyne and the Hippodrome Colne. Changes in the rest of the circuit will be made as soon as possible.

Coventry Evening Telegraph – 3 April 1945

CHILDREN AND SUNDAY CINEMAS

The action of Wednesbury (Staffs) Corporation in putting an absolute ban on the attendance of any child under 15 at cinema shows on Sundays was opposed by Associated Provincial Picture Houses Ltd, who control the Gaumont cinema, Walsall Street, Wednesbury in the Court of Appeal today. Before Mr Justice Henn Collins on 28 February, the cinema company claimed a declaration that the Corporation had no power to impose such a ban. His Lordship declined to make the declaration and the company appealed against this decision. Mr Constantine Gallop KC for the appellants, submitted that the only test that could be applied in this case was whether the party attacking the condition that was imposed could induce the court to take the view that it was unreasonable.

The Master of the Rolls (Lord Green): "Supposing a local authority had imposed a condition that nobody with red hair should be admitted on Sundays, would a court hold that that was reasonable?" Mr Gallop said he thought not. It would be manifestly unreasonable. "The argument for the appellants," he said, "is that where the electors have by a substantial majority voted in favour of Sunday openings, it is going beyond the bounds of what is reasonable or prudent to prohibit a father or mother from taking their children to the pictures. Mr Maurice Fitzgerald KC, for the Corporation, observed that the poll had nothing to do with the admittance of children to cinemas.

Northern Daily Mail – 7 November 1947

YOU CAN'T KEEP YOUR HEAD STILL WITH CINEMASCOPE



CinemaScope, introduced to Britain yesterday in *The Robe* at the Odeon Leicester Square is a great improvement on 3D. You do not have to wear special glasses but it still retains some irritating defects. *The Robe*, on an indefinite run, is presented on the widest of wide screens and the ever-turning heads of the audience reminded me of Wimbledon. The third dimension is not nearly so pronounced as when seen with glasses but it is quite enough to be appreciated. What disappoints me most is the lack of shallow and deep focus picture definition. Backgrounds and foregrounds blur to a marked extent but it can be expected that this infant prodigy of the screen will progress and develop with time. *The Robe* will be seen in Birmingham on 11 January.

Birmingham Gazette – 20 November 1953

ODEON HAYMARKET OPENS

On 4 June, the new luxurious Odeon Haymarket of the Rank Organisation, will become only the second big cinema to open in the West End since the end of the war. Situated in an office block on the site of the old Gaumont (which in its turn replaced the Capitol) the cinema reflects the changing trends in the film world. It has only 600 seats compared with the Gaumont's 1,300 and is designed to impress with comfort. Chosen to open the new cinema is a film very much in the current cinema fashion. For *Barabbas* is a big, lavish Biblical epic and one of the best in this well-populated category. It is made in wide-screen and Technicolor. Another pointer to the way things are going is that the film was made in Rome, now claiming to be rivalling Hollywood, under the direction of Dino de Laurentis, an Italian whose plans are as grandiose as any dreamed of in Hollywood. *Barabbas*, which was directed by Richard Fleischer, is released in Britain by Columbia through BLC films.

With a screenplay by Christopher Fry, based on the novel by Pär Lagerkvist, the epic tells the story of Barabbas, the thief released by public acclaim instead of Christ. It traces his career as, burdened by and uncomprehended guilt, he sees the Crucifixion, is arrested again, spends many years in the appalling sulphur mines of Sicily and becomes a gladiator in Rome. Finally he joins the Christians, accused of setting the City on fire, awaiting death in the Roman capital. Chief merits of the film are a magnificent performance by Anthony Quinn as the brutish, brutal but sympathetic Barabbas, struggling towards comprehension of a world outside his sensed and one of the most exciting gladiatorial combats ever filmed, that between Torvald the champion gladiator and Barabbas.

The Sphere – 26 May 1962

NEWSREEL

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

Photos by Harry Rigby within entry, except where stated.

A number in curly brackets {nnnnn} is the reference for the Cinema Treasures website. Go to: [\[cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn\]](http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn)

ABINGDON (Oxon)

The Council has approved permission for the Guildhall to be used as a cinema. It is expected to be open for the release of *Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again* in July. See p18 last Bulletin.

Oxford Mail – 30 April

BARNESLEY (South Yorks)

Cineworld has signed a 20-year lease to run the new thirteen-screen cinema being built at The Glass Works development. There will be over 2,000 seats including a full-height 450-seat Super Screen. The site is in the town centre, just across the road from the two-screen Parkway (ex Odeon). No opening date has been given.

Barnsley Chronicle – 11 May; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BASILDON (Essex)

Empire has been chosen as the operator of a new ten-screen cinema to be built at East Square. No time scale has been given.

Basildon Echo – 12 June

BATH (North Somerset)

Plans have been submitted to convert Jimmy's Grill in Dorchester Street into a cinema. Two operators are interested and one of them is seeking to provide a two to four-screen cinema with bar and restaurant.

Bath Chronicle – 3 May

BEESTON (Notts)

A new cinema is proposed for a site off Station Road. If planning permission is granted, work could start in 2019 and be completed in 2020.

Nottingham Post – 16 April

BELFAST

A 20 minute documentary film has been produced about the now-demolished Curzon on Ormeau Road. Former cinema-goers, employees and locals share memories of the cinema, which opened in December 1936 and closed in April 1999; it was demolished in 2003. The film premiered at the Queen's Film Theatre. {25363}

Belfast Telegraph – 28 May

BIRMINGHAM (Harborne)

The grade II listed former Royalty has been included in the 'Buildings at Risk' register. It has been empty since bingo ceased around 2012 and was damaged by a fire last November. See p15 Bulletin 50/5. {33866}

Birmingham Post – 7 June

BIRMINGHAM (Ladywood)



The twelve-screen Odeon Broadway Plaza has reopened as an Odeon Luxe. When it opened as the AMC in October 2003 it had 2,909 seats. Odeon took over in summer 2012 and now all seats are electric recliners and the capacity has been reduced to 1,264. The 154-seat iSense screen ① has been converted, even though it was only created in October 2012; it has 4k projection and Dolby ATMOS sound. {24152}

Birmingham Mail – 1 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo [as AMC] taken May 2006

BLACKBURN (Lancs)

Vue's UK managing director fears admissions at their ten-screen site could fall by 40% if the proposed new eight-screen Reel cinema opens on the former Waves site. The Council has borrowed £6.5m to finance the new cinema and Reel will sign a 20-year lease. It has been confirmed by the Council that construction will start on the new cinema this October. The planned opening date is Easter 2020. Conservative councillors have pledged to oppose the plans.

Lancashire Telegraph – 26 April, 18 May, 28 June; sent in by Philip Crompton

BOGNOR REGIS (WEST SUSSEX)

The £1m 108-seat fourth screen in an extension to the grade II listed Picturedrome is scheduled to open in August. The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have been invited to perform the opening ceremony. {27384}

Bognor Regis Post – 18, 25 May

BOURNEMOUTH

Rumours that the Council might buy the former Odeon and/or ABC have been denied.

Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 21 May; sent in by John R Forster

BOWNESS-ON-WINDERMERE (Cumbria)

Thousands of people have joined an on-line group to demonstrate their opposition to a possible redevelopment of the Royalty. The group was set up in response to comments made in the Lake District National Park Authority's [LDNPA] local planning review. It described the cinema building as "deteriorating" and that it "detracts from the quality of the conservation area". Charles Morris, operator of the cinema for 25 years, said he felt that the 91-year-old Royalty was in better condition than ever. The Council has said there is no intention to close the cinema. Visit [\[www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/localplan\]](http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/localplan) to feed-back on the review. {18521}

Westmorland Gazette – 7 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock

BRADFORD (West Yorks)

The new six-screen Light cinema opened on 10 May in the extension to the Broadway Shopping Centre. Seating capacities are: screen ① 105; screen ② 105; screen ③ 50; screen ④ 40; screen ⑤ 37 and screen ⑥ 51. Still to open is a small 20-seat screen that will be available for groups to hire. {57788}

Telegraph & Argus, Bradford – 10 May

BRECHIN (Angus)



Angus Council is understood to be drawing up a package to secure a future for the former Kings. It opened in October 1927 and films ceased in October 1985. It was converted into a nightclub, which closed in the early 2000s. Plans were proposed to demolish the building, retaining the façade and build housing but these came to naught. It has been on Scotland's *Buildings at Risk* register for almost a decade. It is understood to be owned by an Irish developer, who put it on the market last year with a price tag of £0 [ie free] but failed to find anyone willing to take it on. {41454}

Dundee Courier – 30 April; photo taken September 2006

BRIDGWATER (Somerset)

A six-screen cinema is being proposed for the former Splash site at Northgate. Construction could start in June 2019 with a potential opening date of spring 2021.

Bridgwater Mercury – 15 May; Western Daily Press – 31 May

BRIGHTON

Demolition has begun of the grade II listed Astoria and is scheduled to be completed by the time you read this. A block of flats will take its place. It opened in December 1933 with 1,832 seats and a Compton organ. The stage was infrequently used for live shows up until 1958 when the theatre closed for renovations which installed a vast 70mm screen in front of the old proscenium, removed the organ and curtained the impressive auditorium. The balcony steepings were altered and a new projection suite constructed at (and into) the rear balcony. It closed in May 1977 and became a bingo club until 1996; it has been empty since. Plans to turn it into a concert venue came to naught. {1844}

The Argus, Brighton – 9 May

BRISTOL

The owner of a video rental shop has built an 18-seat cinema in its 500-year-old premises. The seats were donated by the Bristol Hippodrome. The tiny 20th Century Flix shop houses 20,000 VHS and DVD movies but last year it made just £160 profit so the owner searched for a way to improve the business.

Daily Express, Metro – 17 May; sent in by Carl Chesworth, Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton

BRYNMAWR (Blaenau Gwent)

The Council has told the trust that runs the Market Hall Cinema that they must pay £100,000 to take over the building; the amount is for "historic debts". The Trust's volunteers say the amount would bankrupt them. The Council said it would offer funding of £47,000 and point out that it spent a "significant sum" to remove asbestos from the building, during work that closed the cinema for six months last year. {26576}

South Wales Argus – 20 April; Gwent Gazette – 26 April

CAMPBELTOWN (Argyll & Bute)

Nicholas Ferguson CBE, chairman of the Argyll and Bute Economic Forum officially opened the restored Campbeltown Picture House on 19 April. The event included a preview of the new film *Edie* starring Sheila Hancock. {16090}

Campbeltown Courier – 13 April

CANTERBURY (Kent)

Planning permission has been given for a development of student flats and a six-screen 900-seat cinema at the former Council depot in Kingsmead. No operator has been mentioned.

Kentish Gazette – 3 May

CASTLEFORD (West Yorks)

The Moonlight drive-in cinema has opened a permanent site at Digerland, following several successful pop-up appearances over the last few months. It will be open seven days a week all year round. The new facility will feature new weather-proof equipment and technology. Admission is £25 per car.

Pontefract & Castleford Express – 19 April; sent in by Carl Chesworth

CHESTER

The Queen and the Duchess of Sussex [Meghan Markle] officially opened the Storyhouse on 14 June. This was exactly eleven years since the closure of the Odeon, which was incorporated into the new venue. Roads were closed and security was tight. It has been operating since May 2017 and in that time over one million customers have passed through the doors. The project has won several awards, including the Building Award for best refurbishment. {2514}

The Chronicle – 7 June; sent in by David A Ellis

CHIPPENHAM (Wilts)



Work has begun to transform the Astoria [Reel] into a five-screen cinema. Phase one of the £2m project is to build three new screens and a foyer area in the downstairs part of the building; this should be complete by 23 July. Phase two, which will be completed by 28 August, is to completely refurbish the two existing upstairs screens. When conversion to five screens is complete, the total seating capacity will be 552: screens ① and ② will have 131 seats each, screen ③ 71 seats, screen ④ 90 seats and screen ⑤ 119 seats. The original two screens held 404 between them (when all seats repaired and functioning!) so it looks as though the steepings in the original 1939 circle will be adjusted to accommodate modern cinema seats. The cinema will celebrate its 80th birthday on 22 May 2019. {24537}

Gazette & Herald – 3 May;

sent in by and additional information & photo from David Reeves

CORK (Ireland)

There was speculation that IKEA was planning a move to the site currently occupied by the Movie Junction drive-in cinema after the large outdoor screen was dismantled by the owners. These rumours were quashed by the owners, who said that the facility was merely closed for maintenance until further notice.

Evening Echo, Cork – 19 June

DARLINGTON

Financial problems have forced the Majestic Theatre to close, with the former owner leaving about £16,000 owed to theatre companies. The 400-seat venue has been taken over by another company, which plans to refurbish and reopen it in the next few months. It originally opened in December 1932 with 1,580 seats in stalls and circle. It became an Odeon in July 1943 and closed in October 1981. It was converted into a snooker club, which closed around 2010. In 2014 renovation work began to convert the building into a banquet suite and live performance venue. Metal cladding was removed and the MAJESTIC name sign reinstated. A children's play area opened in the lower part of the building with a 280-seat live theatre space in the former circle. It was visited by the CTA in April 2017. {26574}

The Stage – 3 May; sent in by R David Simpson

DAVENTRY (Northants)

An £8.2m budget for town centre redevelopment is set to be approved by councillors. The project includes a cinema and the Council plans to work with the Errol Flynn Filmhouse in Northampton to provide expertise in designing the cinema.

Daventry Express, Northampton Chronicle & Echo – 17 May; sent in by Terry Hanstock

CIRCUIT HISTORIES AVAILABLE

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All available from the Sales Officer – address on p4.
please add £3.00 for postage.

Five more pages of cinema news
in the full Bulletin

LETTERS

UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOS

Regarding the 'Unidentified Photos' feature on page 30 of the last Bulletin, I'm sure that I won't be the first person to tell you that the top photographs, sent in by Michael Armstrong, show the Regal Gillingham (Dorset). This cinema opened in 1934 and was closed and demolished in 1963.

Lance Salway

Regarding the photo of members at Hereford on p30 of the last Bulletin. I was on that visit – but missed the photograph. You can see Tony Moss and Richard Gray. At the back is a bearded gentleman called Barry Charndler. I believe Carol Gibbons is on it near the front. One wonders how many of them are still around today? It's over 30 years ago!

Tim McCullen

OUR VANISHED LOCALS

There are many publications on local cinemas now no longer with us, one of which is *Hillingdon Cinemas* by a good friend of mine of many years, James Skinner. We think this is now out of print. I am a member of U3A and recently gave a presentation to the Local History Group based on this book with pictures from it to accompany my talk. Also attending were two ex-projectionists from the Savoy Hayes and Ruislip cinemas. I will be doing another talk for another local history society. The thought has occurred to me that some CTA members may be already have done this as I found people appreciated reviving memories of their locals and also the opportunity of talking to those who worked in the cinemas. I know many members worked in cinemas and from the letters in the Bulletin, have interesting stories to tell. This may prompt some to get something together for their local community. The archive department of the local library can be a great source of information and also the CTA archives of course. We are fortunate in having excellent archives in our local library. Food for thought?

Tim Leman

ASTORIA BRIGHTON

It is sad to see the demise of the Astoria Brighton. I have fond memories of it. I was on holiday with my father back in 1963 and we went to see *Mutiny on the Bounty*, screened in 70mm with six-track sound. It was very impressive and the stereo was great with distinct left and right. While we were there we went to the now-demolished Academy and Essoldo. Brighton was great for the cinema lover. When I was there in 1963 there were over a dozen cinemas operating, including the ABC East Street, Odeon West Street and the Continental Kemp Town.

David A Ellis

WILF REMEMBERS

If he doesn't already know, Wilf Watters (*Wilf Remembers*, CTA Bulletin 52/3) might be interested to learn that the ABC Ritz Edgware is featured at the beginning of the Dirk Bogarde film *For Better, For Worse*. He and Susan Stephen are seen in a cinema just after the opening credits. I doubt if the interior shots are of the Ritz at Edgware but the exterior long shot shows the cinema as it was in the 1950s before the ghastly tin front was added.

Michael Darvell

NORFOLK CLARIFICATION

The Bostock cinema in Attleborough was not called 'The Regal' but simply the Cinema I was born and lived in Attleborough for the first years of my life and only knew it by that name. Here is a copy of a 1951 *Bostock Cinema Circuit* letter, which lists the cinemas in that circuit and a programme from 1958, which confirms the name. Mrs Dorothy Caley (wife of Mr Bert Caley, who was Manager of the Wymondham Regal) was the manageress of the Cinema in Attleborough up to its closure and when it did close, many of the fittings (including seats) were transferred to Wymondham Regal for spares and were also put to use. Some sources state that the cinema closed in 1956 but as you will see from the copy programme it was still operating in 1958. Another amendment would be in respect of the Regal Holt, which was subsequently sold in 1966 (whilst still operating as a cinema) by East Coast Cinemas (part of the Bostock Circuit) to Colin Dashwood (Brother of Roy Dashwood who had purchased the Regal Wymondham the previous year). Films did continue there and were booked in conjunction with Wymondham. Posters and stills were shared between the two cinemas. Bingo was introduced like Wymondham but I am not exactly sure when the building ceased showing films completely. When it did their two Westinghouse rectifiers were transferred to Wymondham to replace the mercury rectifier and the amplifier was also transferred for installation together with rewriter and spools. Their two Kalee 11 projectors were transferred to a museum in Cotton.

Michael Armstrong

ON SEATING CAPACITIES

For some time I have allowed to get myself quite frustrated by the very small seating capacities of new conversions or the latest 'from scratch' cinema builds. It seems quite acceptable for these developers to assume that their patrons will be quite content to view movies in a 35-seat 'auditorium' as long as they can recline their seat. As time goes on, those same patrons will know no better as this is what the offering is. Ergo, they will forever be limited by that 'experience' – or the complete lack of it. (I can get more sense of occasion at home from a 65" curved screen and Atmos sound.)

Now, I've been trying to find out a bit more detail about seating capacities and other relevant cinema information from some of these newer cinemas owners/developers and from some of the new entrant small chains. Their usually very fulsome websites give virtually no information as to capacity, screen size, sound systems – and this also applies to some of the more established larger operators. Yet one can readily find a whole host of detail as to booking charges, coffees or popcorn! I've tried to seek information from their management – stating that a lack of such detail is likely to give new patrons no real sense of the experience that their screens might offer. But there have been no replies from my well intentioned messages. I'm trying hard not to be cynical – maybe I deserve some, er, chastening from other more forgiving readers!

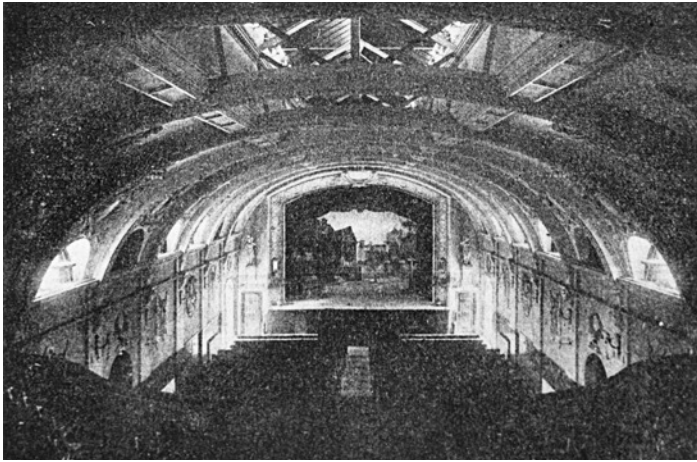
Edward Huggins

More Letters in the full Bulletin

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

110 years



Gem/Windmill, Marine Parade, Great Yarmouth. Opened 4 July 1908.
Architect Arthur S Hewitt. Grade II listed.

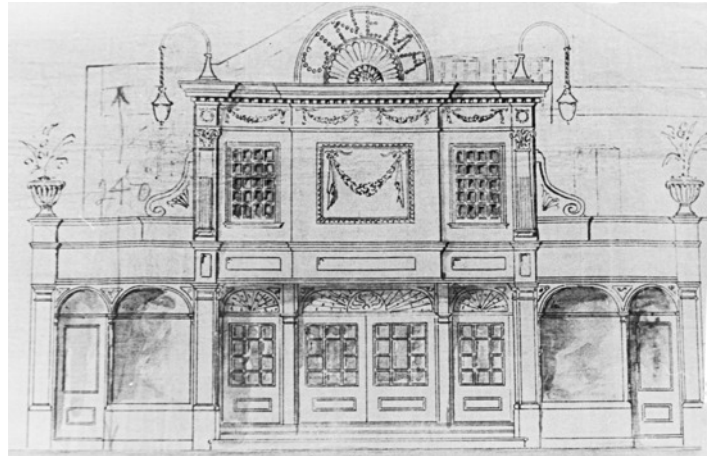
105 years



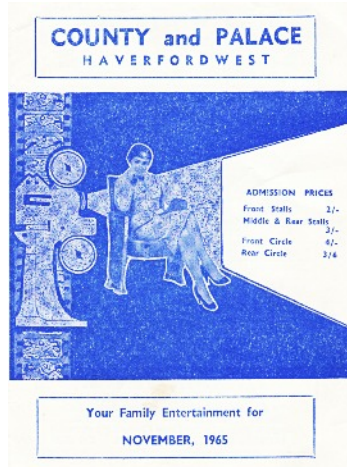
Queen's / Essoldo, Whitby Road, Ellesmere Port. Opened July 1913.
Architect unknown. Grade II listed.



Central, Central Drive, Blackpool. Opened 11 July 1913.
Architect unknown. Grade II listed.



Picture Palace / Rivoli, Brockley Road, Brockley.
Opened 12 July 1913. Architect unknown. Grade II listed.



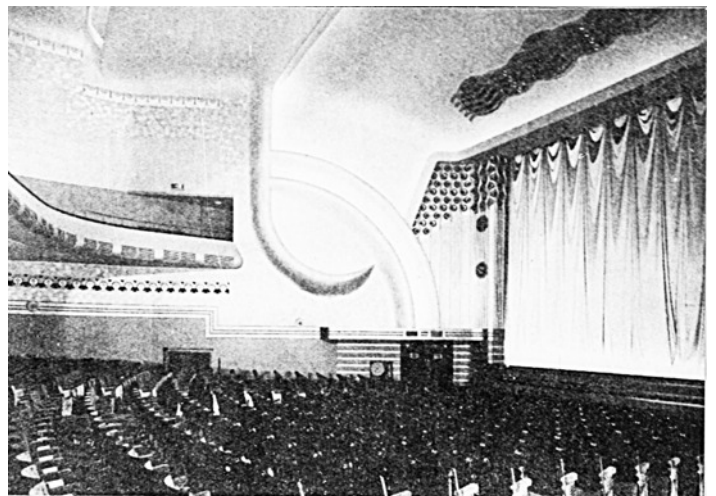
Palace, Upper Market Street, Haverfordwest. Opened 28 July 1913.
Architect unknown. Grade II listed. [Above L]

95 years

Pavilion/Gaumont, Shepherd's Bush Green, Shepherd's Bush.
Opened 16 August 1923. Architects Samuel Beverley and Frank T Verity. Grade II listed. [Above R]

80 years

Regal, North Bridge Street, Bathgate. Opened 17 July 1938.
Architect Andrew David Haxton. B- Listed. (No photo)



Odeon, Rutland Street, Leicester. Opened 28 July 1938.
Architects Robert Bullivant and Harry Weedon. Grade II listed.

**More News from the Archive
in the full Bulletin**

THE ABBEY CINEMA WAVERTREE

By David A Ellis

The Abbey cinema in Wavertree, Liverpool, designed by Alfred Earnest Shennon, was the only cinema in the City to screen three strip Cinerama, back in 1964. The first Cinerama presentation was *This is Cinerama*, shown from 17 March 1964 and ran for seven weeks. The cinema was run by the Wood family, who ran Bedford Cinemas (1928) Ltd. They ran a number of cinemas, including the Mayfair Aigburth and the Empire Garston. A new projection box was installed in the stalls area for Cinerama, housing three projectors. The sound was magnetic and on a separate reel. It carried seven tracks and produced excellent sound separation. Because of cost the three strip Cinerama didn't last long, though there were a few good features made in it, including *How the West Was Won* and *The Wonderful World of the Brothers Grimm*, starring Laurence Harvey. After the three strip system proved not financially viable, 70mm Cinerama was shown on the screen, which was made in strips to cut down on reflection. The three projectors that were required for the original Cinerama were removed in April 1965.

The Abbey first opened its doors on 4 March 1939 with the film *Joy of Living*. The opening ceremony took place at 2:30 and was conducted by a Mr WT Lancashire. The film was supported by Mrs Wilf Hamer and her band. It was stated that she appeared by kind permission of the Grafton Rooms directorate. The Grafton was a popular place to go dancing. In advertising the opening, it was stated that the cinema was equipped with perfect architecture, perfect decoration, perfect comfort, perfect sound and vision and perfect programmes. Talk about blowing your own trumpet! They also said, "We have thought of everything, come and see for yourself." They also boasted a car park, deaf aids throughout, coffee, ices etc brought to your seats and a magnificent hall of mirrors.

The main entrance and the tower had a well-designed scheme of neon lighting. The local paper said: 'From the centre of the main entrance hall, with a glass mosaic floor in varying shades of blue with silver stars, rises an impressive column of light, flanked by two similar half columns.' In the foyer, one wall and the ceiling were completely mirrored. The opposite wall was richly panelled in Australian walnut. The floor, completely laid in wood mosaic, struck a musical note in design. There was a decorative motif in the bass clef. Leading up from the foyer to the first floor lounge was a staircase in green terrazzo, which was ten feet wide and enclosed by an ornate balustrading in polished copper and aluminium.

Suspended ceilings and plain plasterwork was carried out by Adams Brothers of Liverpool. The decorative work in the interior was supplied and fitted by HE Wilson (1924) Ltd, who made good use of their Hewiac spray finishing process. The glass and glazing was provided by

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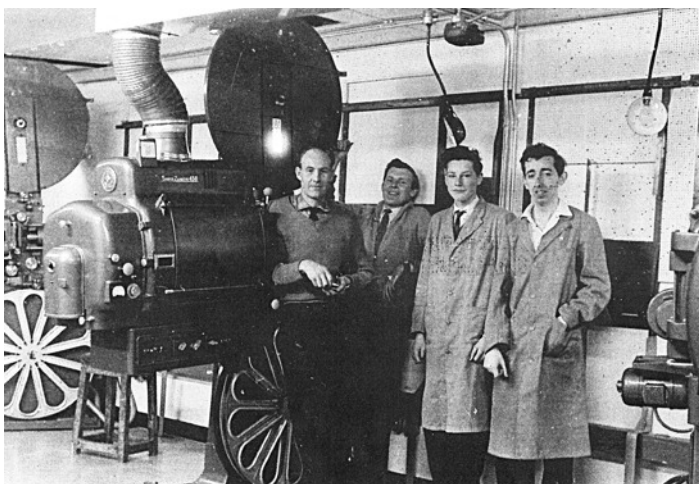
Please send me..... tickets at for the..... p.m. performance on..... Alternative dates..... I enclose stamped addressed envelope and cheque/P.O. made payable to the Abbey, Liverpool

NAME..... ADDRESS.....

ABB EY CIN ERAM A THEATRE
WAVERTREE - LIVERPOOL
Bus routes: 4, 48, 49, 76, 78, 79C & D, 91 and most Cadeville services
CAR PARK for 250 cars



The original frontage and interior of the Abbey



Cinerama projectors and staff at the Abbey

Wilkinson and Co, from Liverpool and Birkenhead. The mirrors to ceiling and walls in the main foyer were supplied and fixed by Williams and Watson Ltd, also from Liverpool.

A novel feature of the foyer was the clock set in the mirrored wall. Two spots of light took the place of the hands. Two pairs of doors led from the lounge to the balcony. The auditorium ceiling was composed entirely of large domes in iridescent gold and individually illuminated. The walls of the auditorium were treated in wide horizontal bands of primrose, orange and gold speckle, separated by bands of silver. The bands led the eye to the main grilles flanking the proscenium, an interesting feature being the illuminated columns of multi-coloured light, which act as a frame. Seating was available for 1,126 on the ground floor and 744 in the balcony. Plumbing throughout was done by Liverpool firm Thomas Murtha and son, who also did the exterior painting and a large amount of interior painting - another local firm. The cinema closed on 4 August 1979 with a 70mm showing of *The Towering Inferno*.

Photos courtesy of Roger Shone & Mike Taylor