



CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

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

# BULLETIN

Vol 52 No 5

ISSN 1479-0882

September / October 2018



The grade II listed former Ritz Ilkeston (Derbys) where bingo ceased in July; photo taken September 2003



The Odeon / Gaumont Eltham Hill (South London) visited by the CTA in May; photo taken July 2006



## FROM YOUR EDITOR

This edition marks exactly twenty years since I took over as Bulletin Editor. Thank you for all the support you have given me during that time. As I have previously indicated, I would like to retire in the not too distant future so if you feel like taking over the reins, please let me know.

It takes about 50-60 hours to produce the Bulletin, after the deadline date has passed and then a further couple of weeks to get it printed and distributed. If you send in something during this time that has already been put in the Bulletin, please don't be disappointed if I can't include it again.

Vic Harvey sent me some plans for a **Regal** at Luton. We cannot work out if this was a scheme that was never built or what eventually became the **Savoy**. In any case, these plans – and all other things you send in – are passed to the archive.

In the Newsreel I have had to credit an unknown member as we can't identify the signature. Please can you make sure you print your name – and all other proper names, cinema names and anything unusual. It makes my life a lot easier!

Thanks to all those who wished me a good holiday. By the time you read this, we should be in the middle of a four-week trip to Austria with our motorhome. I'll let you know how we got on. I have had no time to prepare my usual Cinema Calendar before our departure. I'll do it soon after we come back so watch out for the advert in the next Bulletin. You'll still have plenty of time to get it before the New Year.

Because I had to get this Bulletin finished before I went away, you may receive it earlier than normal. I'm not intending to set a precedent – normal service will be resumed from the next edition!

Finally, some of you will know my interest in photographing unusual signs. Here is one I came across during my cycling in Kent.

*Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor*



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

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE**  
**SATURDAY 20 OCTOBER**

## CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

Company limited by guarantee. Reg. No. 04428776.

Registered address: 59 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, TW11 0DJ.

Registered Charity No. 1100702. Directors are marked † in list below.

**PATRONS:** Allen Eyles; Carol Gibbons; Lucinda Lambton

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Full Membership (UK).....£29

Full Membership (UK under 25s).....£15

Overseas (Europe Standard & World Economy).....£37

Overseas (World Standard).....£49

Associate Membership (UK & Worldwide).....£10

Life Membership (UK only).....£450; aged 65 & over £350

Life Membership for Overseas members will be more than this;

please contact the membership secretary for details.

All membership and subscription enquiries should be sent to  
**MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:** Neville C Taylor [subs@cta-uk.org]

Flat One, 128 Gloucester Terrace, London, W2 6HP

Items for possible inclusion in the Bulletin should be sent to

**BULLETIN EDITOR:** Harry Rigby [bulletin@cta-uk.org]

65 Tennyson Avenue, Harrogate, North Yorks, HG1 3LE

### OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

**CHAIRMAN:** David Trevor-Jones † [chairman@cta-uk.org]

47 The Street, Old Basing, Basingstoke, RG24 7BX

**VICE-CHAIRMAN:** Ian Meyrick †

11 Tarrant Avenue, Witney, OX28 1EE

**SECRETARY:** Adam Unger † [honsec@cta-uk.org]

59 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, TW11 0DJ

**TREASURER:** Neville C Taylor † (details as membership secretary above)

**CASEWORK COMMITTEE – Chairman:** Richard Gray †

45 Arnold Road, Bow, London, E3 4NU [casework@cta-uk.org]

Members: as main committee plus Tim Hatcher,

Jane Jephcote, Mark Price, Vicky Simon, James Weir & Peter Wyld

**ARCHIVIST:** Clive Polden [archive@cta-uk.org]

14 Ivychurch Gardens, Cliftonville, Margate, CT9 3YG

**ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST:** Rachel Marks

73 Cressy House, Hannibal Road, London, E1 3JF

**PUBLIC RELATIONS:** Gerald Glover [publicity@cta-uk.org]

228 Malpas Road, Brockley, London, SE4 1DH

**PUBLICATIONS & SALES OFFICER:** Jeremy Buck †

34 Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN [sales@cta-uk.org]

**WEBMASTER:** Rachel Woodforde

69A Mill Street, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2EE [web@cta-uk.org]

**VISITS CO-ORDINATOR:** Ray Ritmeester [visits@cta-uk.org]

66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB

**PICTURE HOUSE EDITOR:** Allen Eyles [picture.house@cta-uk.org]

13 Tennyson Court, Paddockhall Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1EZ

**CTA SCOTLAND:** Gordon Barr, Gary Painter [scotland@cta-uk.org]

11 Merker Terrace, Linlithgow, EH49 6DD

**CTA CYMRU/WALES:** John Skinner, Jon Williams [wales@cta-uk.org]

3 Swan Lane, Ystalyfera, Swansea, SA9 2JB

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Emma Beeston, Kevin Gooding, Lynda Hillman,

Tim McCullen, Sally McGrath, Ken Roe, David Simpson

Please use [info@cta-uk.org] if uncertain to whom to address an e-mail enquiry; this address will be monitored and e-mails redirected if necessary.

© CTA BULLETIN – published six times yearly by the

### 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 Bill of Presentations

#### FILM MAKING IN NORTH LONDON (1895-1915)

Illustrated talk by Gerry Turvey

The talk will be an account of the major contribution film-makers in the North London area made to early British cinema. It begins with the inventors and pioneers, Birt Acres and Robert Paul at Barnet and Muswell Hill, moves on to the successful commercial producers of the early teens, like British and Colonial at East Finchley and Big Ben at Alexandra Palace and concludes with Hubert von Herkomer at Bushey, who was beginning to think of film as an art form.



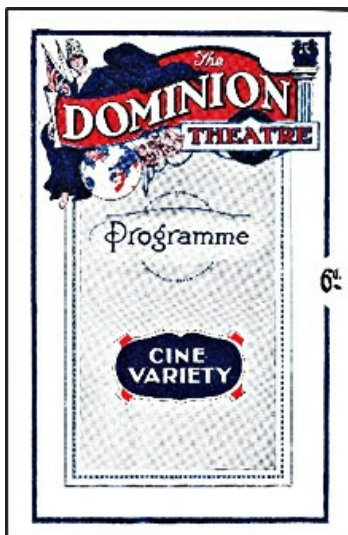
Birt Acres filming the Derby in 1895

Gerry will examine the film genres these and other local producers worked in and the shift from short actualities to longer and increasingly sophisticated fiction productions.

\*\*\*\*PLUS\*\*\*\*

#### WEST END THEATRES THAT SOMETIMES SHOWED FILMS

Illustrated talk by David Smith



A programme example from the Dominion Theatre 1932

The growth of the new sensation of animated pictures ('cinema' had not been coined!) caused a revolution to the established theatre world. Some theatres were forced to diversify and include film shows, initially as a novelty turn on a variety bill and later some embraced film exhibition on a part-time or semi-permanent basis. Gradually theatre buildings evolved to suit the popular form of entertainment. By the mid-1920s this led to a new style of building designed and constructed as 'cinema-theatres' where stage shows could augment films, known as 'ciné-variety'!

CTA member David Smith has researched the subject using his substantial collection of theatre programmes and postcards, supplemented with images from other collections. The talk will show a selection of London's West End theatres with examples of their use as a cinema and what films were shown.

**Organiser to contact:** Richard Norman;  
Email: [RichardNormanCTA@aol.com]

**Admission on the door:** Members and Guests: £8 each. Includes wine, soft drinks and nibbles.

**Many visits are for members only**  
**More details in the full Bulletin**

## CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

### Grade II\* Listed



The Granada Woolwich as a church in April 2015

Although the external impact of the proposed annexe to the Granada in Woolwich has been ameliorated, permission has been granted to convert the fly tower into offices and other ancillary spaces, despite objection from the CTA. This intrusion is highly regrettable as it permanently precludes the cinema from reverting to full theatrical employment.

### Grade II Listed

In somewhat similar vein, the façade of the planned extension to the Hyde Park Picture House in Leeds has been modified, with a brown colour palette replacing the original cream tones. However, the alteration to the foyer has been approved, again despite opposition from the Association. This will destroy the charming intimacy and original atmosphere of the currently unaltered entrance hall.

### Unlisted



The Adelphi Slough in April 2015

Following presentation to Historic England by the CTA of an extremely cogent case for listing of the Adelphi in Slough, it is unreservedly disagreeable to report that a refusal has been received. Once again the determination contains certain inaccuracies and displays little knowledge of the building class. This cinema of 1930 by architect E Norman Bailey presents a dignified façade on an island site and boasts an auditorium retaining an intact original architectural scheme featuring illuminated capitals to its pilasters, alongside an equally impressive and commodious ballroom. Lamentably a Certificate of Immunity from Listing will be issued to the owner.

In reluctant recognition of the above rejection, it has been agreed that an application to list the Odeon in Ashford is unlikely to succeed because this cinema, although largely unaltered, is of no greater quality than the Adelphi. However, its retention is to be recommended to the local Council, which owns the property, although opinion has been expressed by a representative of that august body that it spoils the view towards a church nearby.

**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; <b>Atherley</b> Southampton; Hippodrome, Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; ABC in NW London.
No 17	£3.00	<b>Special Issue</b> featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; <b>Ideal</b> Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; Granada Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; <b>Albert Hall</b> Sheffield; <b>Regal</b> Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Gaumont Managers; <b>Carlton</b> Swansea; Committee's Choice.
No 26	£4.50	Paramount Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; <b>Electric</b> Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New Victoria/ <b>Apollo</b> ; <b>Whiteladies</b> Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; <b>Torbay Cinema</b> ; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; <b>Apollo</b> Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: <b>Essoldo</b> – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the <b>Essoldo</b> Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New Victoria Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	<b>Beaufort</b> Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophane lighting; Imitations of <b>Odeon</b> ; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; The <b>Clifton</b> Circuit; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the <b>Electric Palace</b> Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated Cinemas; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; <b>Palace</b> Conwy; <b>Carlton</b> Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two <b>Regals</b> ; <b>Odeon</b> North Finchley; <b>Majestic</b> Oxford; Films at the <b>Royal Albert Hall</b> .
No 40	£6.00	<b>Tolmer</b> Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham – a <b>Granada</b> man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary; <b>Plaza</b> Stockport; <b>Grosvenor</b> Rayners Lane; <b>Majestic</b> Leeds; Pascal J Stienlet.
No 42	£6.00	<b>Odeon</b> Elephant & Castle, <b>Plaza</b> Crosby; <b>Depot</b> Lewes; <b>Cineworld</b> Chelsea; Gaumont Sheffield Figures.

### Reprinted AGAIN due to popular demand..!

#### ABC – THE FIRST NAME IN ENTERTAINMENT by Allen Eyles

A reprint of the 1993 edition, with a new introduction by the author highlighting developments since the book was published, including the short-lived return of the ABC name. 164 pages, paperback, fully illustrated, £17.50 plus £3 postage.

A few copies are still available of the reprint of *Gaumont British Cinemas*, also by Allen Eyles. 224 pages, paperback, fully illustrated, £17.50 plus £3 postage.

**Special Offer** – buy both ABC and Gaumont together for £30.00, plus £3 postage. Ordering details opposite.

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

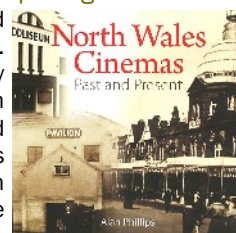
We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 2016 are £4.00 per year (6 issues); individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2017 and 2018 are £4.00 per copy. All prices include postage. There are some issues available from earlier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

## New Publication

### North Wales Cinemas Past and Present

By Alan Phillips. 126 pages, small paperback, fully illustrated in black and white and colour, £6.95 plus postage.

Following recent books about West Wales and South Wales, now it is the turn of North Wales. This concise book is arranged alphabetically from Abergele to Wrexham and includes such large towns as Llandudno and Prestatyn and many smaller towns and villages too. Conwy is included here, with the **Palace Cinema**, which often features in CTA casework reports. There are over 50 towns and villages included here, with a multitude of photographs, although due to the compact size of the publication these are rather small. Nevertheless, this a useful and comprehensive guide to the region's cinemas, which as the title suggests includes modern-day multiplexes too.



## Recently Published (details in previous Bulletins)

### The Cinemas of West Wales

by Alan Phillips. 130 pages, A5 paperback, illustrated. £6.99 plus postage.

### From Projectors to Preachers

*Cinemas that became Churches* by Gavin McGrath.

32 pages, A4 card covers, illustrated. £4.50 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)

**The Last Picture House: Saving Plymouth's Last Original Cinema Building**, by Ian Carroll. 146 pages, A5 paperback, illustrated, £5.99. Available through Amazon: ISBN 978-1721769698.

This book has been produced mainly to publicise the campaign to save the Reel Cinema in Plymouth (the former Royal / ABC / Cannon, etc). 50% of the proceeds will go towards the cost of producing leaflets, stationery, promotional material, etc. After a fairly short history of the building, with mention of other Plymouth cinemas, the bulk of the book consists of reminiscences from patrons past and present and supporting messages from various luminaries and local celebrities. There are many photographs of the remaining architectural features and some historic shots and also a listing of some of the live acts that appeared at the ABC and a section about ghostly encounters.





# DOUBLE FEATURE

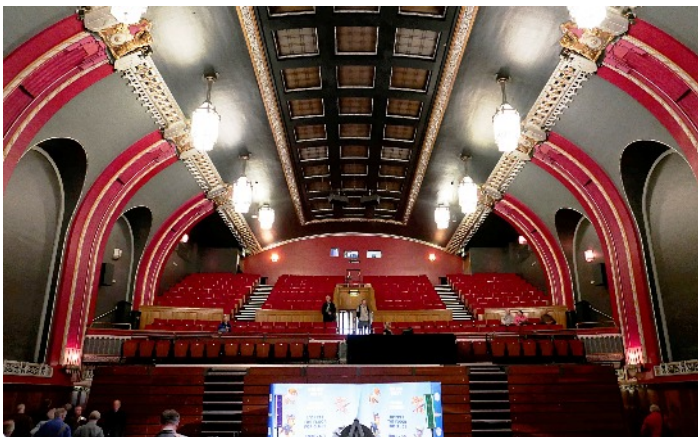
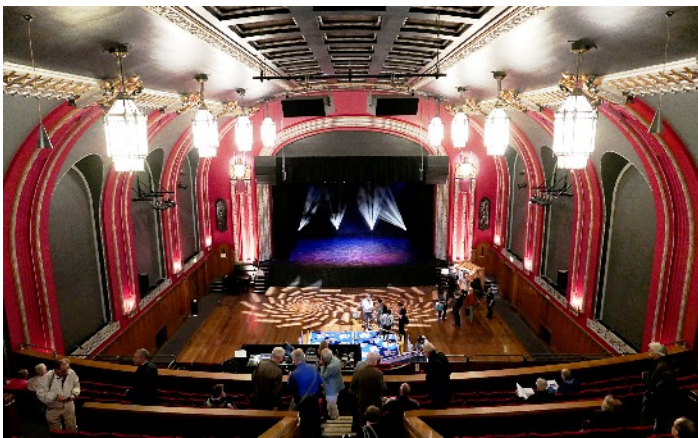
## A report on the CTA Visit to Catford & Eltham Saturday 12 May 2018 by Mike Wood

Due to the unfortunate weather related postponement of the Warwickshire visit, a gap in the events programme needed filling and quickly. Easier said than done, as our events can take months and even years of negotiation with operators to come to fruition. However, Ray Ritmeester came up with a South London double bill of 'A Visit to Catford and Eltham', which did the trick nicely.



The Broadway Catford on the day of the visit

Railway engineering works in South London made the journey from the visit write-up office rather more problematic than usual, so your correspondent took an early lunch break at the Forest Hill Capitol (1928 John Stanley Beard – Listed Grade II) which Wetherspoon have re-opened after its closure and offer for sale in 2014. It is all as we saw it on our last visit in 2006 but perhaps now in need of a little TLC. It was then just a fifteen-minute bus ride to the Broadway Theatre (1932 Bradshaw, Gass & Hope – Listed Grade II) the bus stop being right outside the venue.



The auditorium at the Broadway Catford

It was immediately obvious that something was afoot, because the usual suspects were across the street, already pointing their cameras at this prominent building in Art Deco style with a hint of the gothic. It opened as the Catford Public Halls, an addition to the Gothic Revival Town Hall of 1875, which has since been demolished and replaced by

a bland office block of no apparent distinction. However, we must be grateful that the same fate didn't befall the theatre, which is high, wide and handsome.

Within the stone faced, hip-roofed exterior and set back behind the street-facing range of ancillary spaces, is the auditorium seating about nine hundred, below a curved ceiling with gilded coffered panels and ten large metal and glass lanterns. Four giant round-headed arches feature on each of the side walls, with panels surmounted by shields and all above oak panelling the length of the hall. Heraldic beasts and metal scrollwork grilles flank the curved proscenium arch.

The original Compton organ sits on the stalls floor to stage left. Apart from the seating and drapes, the entire interior appears to be original. A shallow fly tower behind the proscenium allows for house curtains and a screen and the stage extends back but restricted in height and width with a narrow gantry for a fly floor.



The screen, flown



Richard Hills at the Compton organ

Retractable seating can extend forward of the balcony but the flat floor was clear for our visit. We found our favourite places to sit upstairs to hear the organ played by Richard Hills, who demonstrated some classical and light music for us.

It was busy at the theatre with an open day and kids' event but the manager and technical manager, included back-stage, organ loft and the original projection box, on a full tour for us.

It was then a short bus ride to Eltham Hill and the Odeon (1938 Andrew Mather). This is situated nearby the earlier Well Hall Odeon (1936 Andrew Mather with Horace Ward – Listed Grade II), which has been substantially rebuilt as flats. Eltham Hill seated more patrons in stadium configuration but was somewhat less distinguished in its design. However, it subsequently took the name Gaumont and it is still there now, reinvented as a Mecca bingo club. Photo on front cover.

Our thanks go to the managers and staff at these two venues, Richard Hills for playing the Compton for us and to Ray Ritmeester for organising it and providing the notes, supplemented by John Kennett's recollections of cinema-going in Eltham.

*Photos by the author*

### Links for more:

[[www.southlondonclub.co.uk/blog/2017/9/25/a-brief-history-of-the-catford-broadway-theatre](http://www.southlondonclub.co.uk/blog/2017/9/25/a-brief-history-of-the-catford-broadway-theatre)]

[[councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s46607/Catford-Broadway\\_ICA\\_Sketchook-No4-A4.pdf](http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s46607/Catford-Broadway_ICA_Sketchook-No4-A4.pdf)]

[[historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253065](http://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1253065)]



# A SEASIDE CINEMA PARADISE

By Mike Whitcombe



The exterior of The Dome cinema

I've always envied the residents of Worthing. Not only is the northern edge of this West Sussex town caressed by the outstanding beauty of the rolling South Downs but the English Channel laps a southern boundary dominated by a traditional promenade, complete with a pier that's home to a recently restored art deco tearoom. On summer afternoons when the sky is a cloudless blue and the sun shines kindly down, when seagulls shriek high overhead and an ice cream complete with chocolate flake provides an enjoyable treat, Worthing really is the place to visit.

But for cinema enthusiasts – including those of us who enjoy an ice cream not bought from a cinema kiosk – Worthing truly is a gem of a place. For in an age of multiplexes – that, to be fair, look and feel the same once you're inside their plushly-seated auditoria – Worthing boasts three unique cinemas, two of which are proudly still single-screen affairs.

The three-screen **Dome**, situated on the seafront itself, a few hundred yards east of the pier, is arguably the best known of this trio. Built and owned by the Swiss born Carl Adolf Seebold and designed by London architect Theophilus Arthur Allen, it was originally a flat-floored multi-purpose entertainment hall used for roller skating, concerts, dancing, billiards and meetings. It opened on Easter Sunday 16 April 1911 and was called the *Kursaal*, a Teutonic name for 'Cure Hall'. Six months later, on Saturday, 7 October, an upstairs cinema called the *Kursaal Electric Theatre* opened, operating daily (except Sundays) with a change of films every Monday and Thursday. In 1915 as Britain waged war with Germany, the name was changed to the **Dome**. Six years later the building became the cinema we know today, when at a cost of £8,000 the auditorium moved downstairs to occupy the former main hall. The remodelling was by architect R Kirksby and the opening feature, accompanied by a six piece orchestra, was *Pollyanna* starring Mary Pickford.

Seebold oversaw this conversion, owning the site until 1949, two years before his death. In 1954 CinemaScope was installed, requiring a new proscenium arch to be fitted in front of the old one. During these years, the **Dome** was in competition from the nearby Rivoli, the

ABC Plaza and the Odeon. As they closed (in 1960, 1968 and 1986 respectively) the **Dome** kept struggling on, despite a major redevelopment scheme being announced for the area, which in 1969 led to the building being purchased by the Council.

The next thirty or so years were a heart stopping rollercoaster for this Edwardian masterpiece. The Council showed little interest in the business or the building, threatening closure regularly while offering short term leases, which resulted in anyone running the site unable to spend money on improving facilities. Unscrupulous developers, public protests, petitions, diminishing audiences, a Grade II listing in May 1989 (helped by the CTA) that was upgraded to the present Grade II\*, all made headlines until finally, in November 1999, the Council sold the **Dome** for a nominal £1 to the Worthing Dome and Regeneration Trust. They were backed by a £2.5 million Heritage Lottery Fund award, which led to the building being closed between December 2005, and July 2007 for a full restoration, producing the beautiful late art nouveau inspired cinema you see today.

The **Dome** is, of course, instantly recognisable by its distinctive dome that sits atop the three-storey entrance tower. Venture inside and further painstakingly restored period details greet you. There's the original mahogany paybox – still in daily use [R] – original wood panelled foyer and original auditorium complete with side balconies. Fancy a drink while taking all this in? Then head for the Projectionists' Bar, entered via the main foyer. A couple of projectors stand guard as you relax in comfy chairs with old film reels as tables. Not keen about the movie in screen ①? Then head for the first floor



and screen ②, called the **Electric Theatre**, which opened in November 2002 and is housed in the original 1911 auditorium. Or you could grab the latest blockbuster in the newly opened (February 2018) 41-seat screen ③. Situated in a former shop at the front of the building it boasts a wall to wall screen and romantic double seats embroidered with a logo of the **Dome**.



The foyer at The Dome

PDJ cinemas were responsible for this latest addition. They have operated the site since 2007 but took full ownership from the Trust two years ago in a sale triggered by unpaid debts. The sale sparked controversy but their continued investment suggests the **Dome** is in safe hands.

My favourite Worthing cinema – and yes, I know, like children, you shouldn't really have a favourite – is, however, the single screen **Connaught**. In purely architectural terms, the **Dome** is arguably the winner, mainly because its main auditorium remains pretty much





The façade and foyer at the Connaught

unaltered since it opened almost a century ago. But there's something about the look and feel of the Connaught that appeals to the romantic in me. It's an endearingly nostalgic place with an evocative art deco frontage and entrance hall that positively drips glamour. The auditorium, appealingly wide with working festoons and a capacity for five hundred, still suggests a time around eighty years ago when cinema ruled supreme. And its history is as fascinating as the Dome.

It opened in July 1914 as the Picturedrome, capacity 860, a purpose-built cinema designed by Eastbourne architect Peter Dulvey Stoneham. Seven years later it faced competition from the Carl Seebold owned Dome and when Seebold built and opened the nearby Rivoli in March 1924 cinema audiences at the Picturedrome declined. In 1926 Seebold bought the Picturedrome, giving him ownership of all three Worthing cinemas. But with the opening of two art deco super cinemas in the town, namely the Plaza in December 1933 and the Odeon in March 1934, both of which boasted over 1,500 seats, audiences at the Edwardian built Picturedrome fell and its future looked bleak.

At the time the adjacent Connaught Hall housed the Worthing Repertory Company, who were doing turn-away business. Seebold saw a lifeline for his building and in 1935 the repertory company made the Picturedrome its new home, renaming it the Connaught Theatre. Seebold invested £60,000 towards remodelling work, which included a first floor cocktail bar and lounge area (that still remains open as the Fraser Bar) and the frontage we see today. The entrance façade was completely rebuilt in a Streamline Moderne-style of two storeys paraped in three bays, ribbon windows, black tiles (sadly removed in the mid-1980s) and cream faience. It was a startlingly modern look. And although the building was now a full-time theatre – perhaps the first purpose-built cinema to be so converted – it suddenly looked more like a cinema than the recently opened nearby Odeon! Seebold relinquished control of the building in April 1950 when he sold the lease for £3,500.

The theatre continued until 1966 when diminishing attendances forced it to close. The usual public outcry followed and in 1967 Worthing Corporation purchased it. The auditorium was revamped in 1972, when film projection facilities were installed and the Connaught strug-

gled on with live theatre, closing for a short while again in 1986. That was the year the Odeon also closed, leaving the Dome as Worthing's only cinema. On 2 March 1987, the Connaught, although primarily still a venue for plays, screened its first film in fifty-two years when the Richard Attenborough directed *A Chorus Line* was shown. Movies had finally returned!

Although several plays are still staged at the Connaught each year, it's now daily film shows that form the bulk of the programming. This includes programming for the first floor, single-screen Connaught Studio, in the building next door. This is the former Connaught Hall that opened in October 1916 as a venue for vaudeville entertainment and was used as a rehearsal place and a prop store for theatrical productions after 1935. It reopened as an entertainment venue called the Ritz in June 1995 when the Council installed projection equipment and 240 seats. The first film shown was *Nell* starring Jodie Foster on 3 June.

For more than twenty years this was a delightful auditorium full of Edwardian grandeur. But in 2017 an £80,000 revamp to utilise the space when theatre or comedy is occasionally staged led to the auditorium being completely transformed and the capacity being reduced from 240 to 160. This was accomplished by dropping a wall from the projection box that extended over the rear third of the auditorium and creating a tiered five row balcony along with four rows of stalls in front and a bar area behind. Although the work was well done and the introduction of a bar, open for specific performances, definitely increases the opportunity for extra revenue, the alterations resulted in a loss of a certain charm. The new seats might be comfortable (although the leg room in the balcony is tight) and the picture quality and sound first class but the graceful elegance of the original Edwardian theatre no longer exists and that's a shame.

But despite this one small disappointment, Worthing is still an indulgence to be savoured for cinema enthusiasts. An afternoon movie, say, within the art deco delights of the Connaught can then be followed by a movie a little later within the Edwardian delights of the Dome – less than a ten minute stroll away. Life doesn't get much better than that!

There was a time when cinema-going was shaped by the individual cinemas you visited. Every cinema had its own peculiarities and often the quirks of a particular auditorium enhanced the enjoyment of the movie showing on the silver screen. With the closure of so many much loved picture palaces, that feeling has been lost. But at Worthing, thanks to the existence of the Dome, Connaught and Connaught Studio, a trip to the movies remains a truly memorable experience. Book your tickets today!

All photos by the author.



The entrance to the Connaught Studio

## CIRCUIT HISTORIES AVAILABLE

### REDUCED PRICES

by Allen Eyles – all fully illustrated with gazetteers  
 ODEON 1 – Oscar Deutsch Entertains Our Nation – £15.00  
 ODEON 2 – From J Arthur Rank to the Multiplex – £15.00  
 Buy both Odeon 1 & 2 together for £27 (plus postage)  
 THE GRANADA THEATRES – £18.99

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



# 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]

## ALTRINCHAM (Cheshire)

Work has begun on the new Everyman in George Street, which is set to open this winter. The four-screen cinema is situated in the former JJB Sports unit.

*Altrincham Today* – 3 July

## ANNAN (Dumfries & Galloway)



The closure of the Odeon in Dumfries (see p14 last Bulletin) has led to a huge rise in attendances at the Lonsdale in Annan, 16 miles away. 21 of the 28 shows over the first weekend were completely sold out, with 1,650 people attending. The two screens have 107 and 56 seats. The manager is urging people to book in advance to avoid disappointment. [www.annancinema.co.uk] {17440}

*Daily Record* – 8 August; photo taken August 2009

## ASHFORD (Kent)



Changes have been made to the planned expansion of the twelve-screen Cineworld. The number of extra screens has been reduced from three to two, one of which will be an IMAX screen. A new front entrance will be built and the car park will be altered. The work is to be completed in two phases with the cinema development coming first. Cineworld is also behind the six-screen site at Eldwick Place in the town centre, which will be operated under its Picturehouse brand. {24116}

*Kentish Express* – 28 June; photo taken April 2008

More than 2,000 people have signed a petition calling on the Council to turn the former Odeon into a theatre. It opened in August 1936 with 1,570 seats in stalls and balcony; films ceased in August 1975. It became a bingo club in 1976, which closed last March. The CTA visited in July 2006, when this picture [top next column] was taken. See also p18 Bulletin 52/3 and Casework p6 this Bulletin. {14785}

*Kent Online* – 21 July; sent in by Philip Stevens



The interior of the former Odeon Ashford, on bingo in July 2006

## AYR



The Odeon celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on 30 July. It opened in 1938 with 1,732 seats in stalls and circle. It was tripled in July 1987 with 433 seats in the former balcony and two 138-seat minis under the circle. In 1992 the front stalls were converted into a 449-seat fourth screen. Many architectural features remain. The CTA visited in September 2009, when the above photo was taken.

*Ayrshire Post* – 25 July

## BARNSELY (South Yorks)



The former Electric Theatre is now a private hire venue called The Old Picture House. When the new owner took over three years ago he had no idea the building had been a cinema but when he found out he renamed it. The ground floor retains most of the original features with a stage where the screen would have been. The upper floor sits where the projection room was, hanging over the lower floor. There is also a rooftop garden. The owner is looking to put on film screenings and shows in the future. {24618}

*Barnsley Chronicle* – 3 August; photo taken April 2008



### **BASILDON (Essex)**

Plans for a ten-screen Empire cinema at East Square have been approved by the Council. A building contractor is now being sought.

*Basildon Echo – 25 July; Basildon Standard – 3 August; sent in by Margaret Burgoine*

### **BATH (North Somerset)**



A very rare opportunity to see a film again on a big screen at the grade II\* listed Forum has been cancelled. The Forum was scheduled to show *Raiders of the Lost Ark* with live accompaniment from the Czech National Symphony Orchestra as part of a UK tour on Thursday 20 September. Ticket prices started at £27.50 including booking fee.

*Sent in by Allen Eyles [photo]*

**AE comments:** No explanation for the cancellation – presumably poor ticket sales. Very sad. I would have liked to have gone. However, films that would better suit its Romanesque auditorium include *Gladiator* and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*.

### **BERLIN (Germany)**

More like an art installation than a movie theatre, a new arthouse cinema *Delphi Lux* has opened in the cool City West. It has 600 seats across seven auditoria with a different colourscape in each with LED strip lighting and textile covered walls.

*Metro – 6 August; sent in by Tom Laughlan*

### **BIRKENHEAD (Wirral)**

The seven-screen Vue (ex Warner Village) could be demolished for offices and a new cinema built on the other side of the park. The move is part of a major redevelopment of the Europa Boulevard area. {24149}

*Liverpool Echo – 31 July*

### **BIRMINGHAM (Central)**

The New Alexandra theatre is to undergo a £650,000 revamp and revert to its original name, the *Alexandra*. All seats and carpets in the grand circle will be replaced and improvements made to the bar and dressing rooms. The venue opened in 1901.

*The Stage – 9 August; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### **BISHOPS STORTFORD (Herts)**

A 500-seat theatre and a three or four screen cinema are part of the Council's plans for the Old River Lane site. However, the Council has deferred plans for a 546-space multi-storey car park – the leisure development cannot start until this is completed, meaning that it would not be operational until at least 2023.

*Herts & Essex Observer – 19 July*

### **BLACKPOOL (Lancs)**

The grade II\* listed Winter Gardens complex celebrates its 140<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. The *Pavilion Theatre* inside the complex is to be restored and returned to live use. It was a full-time cinema in the 1950s but was converted into a bar in the 1980s and the proscenium was bricked-up. It has undergone some refurbishment in recent years. {31748}

*Selladoor Press Release – 11 July; The Stage – 19 July; sent in by Philip Nevitsky & Barry Quinton*

### **BOWNESS-ON-WINDERMERE (Cumbria)**

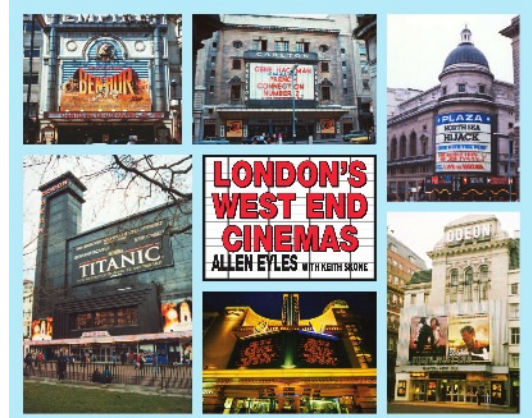
The *Royalty* has been deemed a 'cultural asset' by South Lakeland District Council to protect it for the future. This would stop the site being anything other than a cinema for the next 15 years. The Lake District National Park had said the cinema was "deteriorating" – see p12 last Bulletin. {18521}

*North West Evening Mail – 2, 19 July; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

## **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.

### **BRADFORD (West Yorks)**

Work to transform the former Odeon / New Victoria into a 4,000 capacity music venue was due to begin in September. There will be a full strip-out of the 1960s subdivisions and a new get-in door created at the rear of the stage. A planning application for the next phase is due to be submitted in the autumn with work due to commence next summer. An electricity substation in the north tower will be relocated by National Grid at no cost to the project, enabling the tower to be fully opened up and restored to its original layout. {3677}

*Yorkshire Post – 30 July*

### **BRIGHTON**

Campaigners have welcomed a Council plan for the grade II\* listed Hippodrome. Currently under consultation, it states that any plan submitted by the site's owners must preserve the building's original function as a theatre. It also states that if no progress is made within a reasonable time frame, the Council will consider producing a plan for the site itself. The venue has been closed and boarded-up since 2007. {36884}

*The Argus – 8 August; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### **BURNLEY (Lancs)**

Work has begun to demolish the part of the Charter Walk shopping centre that housed the Studio 123 cinemas. The first two were opened in July 1970 by the Leeds-based Star chain and a third screen was added in 1972. It closed and in 1985 was taken over by an independent operator, finally closing in January 1998. The Council say the demolition will remove an unsightly and underused building and is part of wider plans for the continued regeneration of Burnley town centre. {44203}

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

### **CHORLEY (Lancs)**

Work on the development incorporating a new six-screen Reel cinema was due to start in October. Opening is expected just before Christmas 2019.

*Lancashire Telegraph – 26 July*

**Five more pages of Newsreel  
in the full Bulletin**



# LETTERS



## SATURDAY MORNING PICTURE SHOW

I recently picked up some Saturday morning club badges on eBay that I thought may interest other members. There's usually a good selection of ABC Minors badges (search 'abc minors') but I hadn't seen these more unusual ones [above] before. I'd love to hear from anyone that could put a date or give a bit of background information on them.

Ben Doman

## ABBEY CINERAMA

Nice article by David A Ellis about the Abbey Cinerama in Liverpool on the back page of the last Bulletin. The projectionists in the photograph were all friends of mine. Indeed I worked with two of them before they joined Cinerama as we all worked for the Rank Organisation. From left to right — Chief Projectionist Ron Checkley; Second Projectionist Jim Wood; Third Projectionist Ian Brown; Co-second Projectionist Des McCreal. I worked with Jim and Des. Only one projector was removed, the remaining two were reconfigured for 70mm projection and remained until the cinema was closed in 1979. On 7 August 1979 all the contents of the cinema were auctioned off; I have a copy of the auction brochure. The projectors were bought by an exhibitor in Birmingham. The building still looks the same today from the outside; part of it is a supermarket and the remainder is snooker. Only two of the projectionists are still alive, Ron Checkley and Ian Brown. Ron lives not far from me and Ian lives in Jersey. Des McCreal took the photograph using a time exposure. Not bad for its time.

Mike Taylor

## BIRKS ABERFELDY

After going to the Birks Cinema in Aberfeldy this week and seeing the list of six different films being shown one day (on one screen), which would have cost 6 x £8.50 (£51.00!) it made me think back to the continuous performance days when you could go to the cinema at 1pm, pay 1/6 and stay until the Queen was played around 10:30pm after having seen the main film three times, the support, News and *Look at Life* at least twice. Just another way of seeing how much seeing a film on the big screen has risen over the 50 years. How lucky the people of Aberfeldy are to have an old cinema reborn. When we go it is a 60 mile round journey but it's so much nicer than the multiplex film machine and the smell and foot crunch of popcorn — and it has red seats, much more welcoming than the dismal black leather, which now seems the norm at most multiplex cinemas.

David J Kay

## WALTURDAW

Among the many people supplying cinema equipment was Walturdaw. They had offices in London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Glasgow and Dublin. On my projection room visits I never came across a Walturdaw projector. I wonder how many cinemas installed them? Apart from projectors they supplied sound equipment, carpets, lenses, seating, arc lamps, lighting, uniforms curtains and spots. A company that was a lot bigger than I thought. Are there any members who can shed more light on them and know where some of their equipment was installed?

David A Ellis

## ROXY NYC MODEL

Further information has been sent in about the Roxy New York City model photo featured on page 28 of the letters section of the last Bulletin. The Ben Hall mentioned was one of the founders of Theatre Historical Society of America, and author of the book *The Best Remaining Seats*. He was murdered in his New York apartment by a rent boy he had picked up in Times Square.

Ken Roe

## DAM BUSTERS IN BOWNESS

One of the extras on the newly restored DVD/Blu-Ray of *The Dam Busters* (Studio Canal) — "The making of The Dam Busters documentary" — briefly features the Bowness Royalty Cinema's organ as an organist (sorry, don't know who it is) plays a few bars of Eric Coates' famous march. Another extra shows newsreel footage of the film's 1955 royal premiere, with a number of interior shots of the foyer and lounge of the Empire Leicester Square [now Cineworld].

Terry Hanstock

## INFORMATION WANTED

Does anyone know the title of the music used under the *Now Showing* title on Talking Pictures TV?

John R Forster

The comedy series *Taskmaster* that finished on 4 July on Freeview channel Dave appeared to be filmed in a red plush theatre with boxes and a circle. Can anyone tell me which theatre was used?

R David Simpson

## OLD CINEMA SEATS — WHEREVER NEXT?



I was surprised to find four refurbished cinema seats in the new Next store in Dover, for the use of men fitting on new shoes. I was told some other new Next stores have such seats but both another branch and interested customers have been told they are not for sale! They are in sight of a lot more newer seats in the adjacent Cineworld!

Martin Tapsell



# ARCHIVE DONATIONS

As reported at this year's CTA AGM, the Archive has once again received donations both large and small. I would like to highlight just two that may be of interest to readers.

## CLIFTON CINEMA CIRCUIT

In December last year the Archive received a large box packed with papers relating to the Clifton Cinema Circuit. These papers contained company records and documents as well as correspondence and publicity material. The collection contained a great deal of material about Sir Sydney Clift, including his will and material on members of his family, including a 35mm newsreel of his daughter's wedding. One of the most interesting items was a small plaque [below] presented to Clifton Cinemas by the Ministry of Aircraft Production in 1942 in recognition of the funds raised by the Circuit for production of a Spitfire. Other paperwork documents the Spitfire fundraising project, including complaints about it from patrons! There is also material on Sir Sydney's trip to Hollywood to promote UK exhibitors in 1949 where he is pictured with various studio operators of the time and film stars like John Wayne and Bob Hope.



Sir Sydney Clift



Sir Sydney Clift with John Wayne

## IRVING T PATTERSON DRAWINGS

Another unique collection arrived last summer in the form of various architectural drawings showing interior and exterior views of cinemas designed by the George Coles practice. These were saved by Irving T Patterson who worked as an architect in the practice in the 1930s and was responsible for many of these drawings. These include exteriors of the Ritz Leyton and Odeon Kennington – both unbuilt projects by George Coles and interiors for the Granada Welling, Trocadero Elephant and Castle and Troxy Stepney. Due to the valuable and unique nature of these drawings we have arranged for them to be professionally photographed.

## DONATIONS

Should you wish to donate anything at all, including digital photographs, please do get in touch. Also if you can spare a little time to volunteer for the Archive please let me know. If you are familiar with Word and Excel there are tasks that can be undertaken at home with no need to travel to the Archive. [archive@cta-uk.org](mailto:archive@cta-uk.org).



Drawing for the unbuilt Odeon Kennington



Drawing for the foyer of the Troxy Stepney



# HOLIDAY SNAPS

## Cinemas and Theatres of the Costa Brava

*Sent in by Anthony Wills*



Top to bottom: The Cines Roses multiplex at Roses  
The Comta Theatre at Ripoll (also shows films)  
The Teatro Municipal Jordi at Figueres (despite the sign  
there is no evidence of any films currently being shown there)

## Interesting conversion of a Venetian cinema

On a recent trip to Venice I found this very special, little, former cinema, the Teatro Italia, which had been subject to 'adaptive reconstruction' to turn it into a supermarket. I don't believe it was ever used as a theatre as there is no fly tower or area behind the proscenium arch. One good example of the thought that was given to the conversion is that the former ticket box is now the security office – sadly the guard was on the ball and prevented my access to the balcony area; I was keen to see whether the projection box was intact!

*Sent in by Stewart Kidd  
photos next column*

