



CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

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

# BULLETIN

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Screen ① at the Empire (ex Carlton) in London's Haymarket, which has gained grade II listing – see p24; photo taken July 2013 by Ken Roe



Group photo taken outside the Burgsvik Bio (Gotland, Sweden) by Elaine Harwood – report on p13



## FROM YOUR EDITOR



Thanks to all who wished us a good holiday and/or sent 'welcome back' messages on our return. We set off on 4 September and the first three weeks were wall-to-wall sunshine. We kayaked on, swam in and cycled round a couple of Austrian lakes and went up the 1,800m Shafberg [St Wolfgang] on a steam-operated cog railway – expensive [€36 each] but well worth it. The weather went downhill for the last week but we made the best of it. In Salzburg, we came across *Fräulein Maria's Bicycle Tour* [www.mariabicycletours.com] which takes you round 20 *The Sound of Music* locations by bike. It costs €30 per adult for a 3½ hour trip, bike hire included. I'm ashamed to say I only photographed one cinema, the three-screen Biber Kino in Bebra, Germany [above] [web.biber-kino.de]. Bebra is the twin town to Knaresborough, the next town to the editorial office.

Thanks also to all who continue to send material for the Bulletin. Despite a huge 36 pages, I was very tight for space in this edition. There are three visit reports and I've had to hold over a fourth (Mike Wood's *Apollo* Ardwick) until next time. I have also had to retain numerous holiday snaps and several other items, including a very comprehensive article by Hector Hill on the history of Walturdaw and Wilf Watters' exploration of Margate. I'll try to print as many as possible next time but I still may have to keep some until the following Bulletin.

Whenever I type in the *Cinema Business* section that a certain film has broken box-office records, I always think that it is meaningless, as admission prices are constantly going up. Surely the number of 'bums on seats' would be a more realistic measure of a film's success – what do you think?

On p16 John Kennett has written about the Regent Lyme Regis. As this edition was being finalised, I received a press release from WTW-Scott Cinemas saying work is continuing behind the scenes to rebuild the cinema and that, contrary to rumours, the company has not sold the site; they are currently working on a fourth set of design proposals. "Once we have a viable, workable scheme, we look forward to working with the local authority and Historic England to progress this."

Finally, may I wish you all the compliments of the season, using this film frame, courtesy of Kevin Wheelan.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE  
THURSDAY 20 DECEMBER**

## 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 state if you require items to be returned and enclose SAE,

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'S CHRISTMAS PARTY AND CAVALCADE



### Invitation

**Saturday 15 December at 5:00pm** (Doors open 4:30pm)

**Venue:** The Gallery at Alan Baxter Associates  
75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EL

Admission on the door, £10 each  
(including wine and light refreshments and a raffle ticket)

No advance booking required – just turn-up  
members may bring a guest, paid at the same rate.

This year's Christmas party is being combined with our annual Members' Slide Show to produce a festive evening.  
We are planning a **CAVALCADE** of entertainment; some Members have created short presentations consisting of slides or movies that they would like to share with other members.



#### Some of the treats and surprises from participants will include:

A Royal Film Premiere at **REGAL**, March Arch  
TV programme celebrating 100 years of licensed cinema buildings  
The One Show Experience - a personal recollection to appear on TV  
Two Cinema Mavericks who defied their local Councils  
Where Are We? - A tantalising quiz of cinema photos  
On The Buses to visit a cinema – and another – and another ...  
Tracking an early cinema along an old railway line  
A cartoon with a touch of the Movies  
**FINALE:** Clips from fabulous 1940s and 50s Technicolor Musicals

### Other Events of Interest [not organised by the CTA]

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

#### THE PLAZA STOCKPORT

Thursday 15 November *White Christmas* (1954) [U] 7:30pm  
Box Office: 0161 477 7779; website [www.stockportplaza.co.uk]

#### THE REGAL EXPERIENCE, WYMONDHAM

9 December *Scrooge, The Musical* plus  
*Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer* 1944 cartoon

Shows on Sundays at 2:30pm at the Wymondham Ex-Service's Club (former **Regal** cinema) NR18 0AT [tinyurl.com/zddvkq4].  
Further information from Michael Armstrong [01953 603246]

#### THE FECKENODEON Worcestershire, B96 6HN

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

24 November *The Post* (2017) [15]

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

#### REGENT CINEMA MUSEUM OPEN DAYS

Calling all cinema enthusiasts! Step into a bygone era with a behind-the-scenes tour of the Regent Christchurch (Dorset) projection room. Enjoy a live demonstration of our 35mm projector, which has been lovingly restored by a team of loyal volunteers. The extensive collection includes countless photographic images, old cinema posters, antique cinema fixtures and more! Ideal for anyone with an appreciation for the pre-digital days.

Saturdays: 12 Jan (sold out), 9 Feb & 9 Mar at 10am & 11:15am.

Tickets: £5 per person. [tinyurl.com/y9c5r62m]

Spaces are limited to 6 per tour – book now to avoid disappointment!

### INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [princecharlescinema.com] The Prince Charles cinema in London's West End does regular showings in 35mm and 70mm. There is a link at the bottom of the page to 35mm showings or put "35mm" or "70mm" in the search box. {2581}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y8lpu8d2] A video from the *Liverpool Echo* inside the [then] five-screen Paramount/Odeon in 1999. {6520}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ydgbqvtd] A page from the *Cambridge News* with photos inside the former **Central** cinema. {36845}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ybmpstfp] *Insider Travel* website – 12 Movie Theatres from around the world.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ycfehqw7] A 20 minute video on the *Essex Live* website inside the abandoned Odeon Harlow. {2510}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yck42brf] A page from the *Royal Albert Hall* on how the venue is set up as a cinema. {53679}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y748fo09] A page from *Nottinghamshire Live* on the former **Elite** cinema Nottingham; {21746} *sent in by Terry Hanstock*
- ★ [www.facebook.com/groups/lookingbackatdoncaster] pictures inside the former **Gaumont**; {18617} *sent in by Andrew Roberts*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yb2jy8f3] A 2-minute video on the BBC website: Retro filmmaking & resurgence of Super 8; *sent in by Philip Stevens*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9ou8dw7] *Sky News*: Huge haul of stolen Hollywood film equipment found in Argentina; *sent in by Philip Stevens*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9kdjrr8] *Architectural Digest Magazine*: Five beautiful restaurants in former cinemas; *sent in by Bob Bradshaw*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9xryayb] *Islington Gazette*: **Marlborough Theatre** history; {4302} *sent in by Terry Hanstock*



# 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; <b>Hippodrome</b> , Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; <b>ABC</b> 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; <b>Tivoli</b> Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; <b>Ideal</b> Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; <b>Granada</b> 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	<b>Paramount</b> Newcastle; Edward Stone; <b>Granada</b> 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</b> 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; <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 <b>New Victoria</b> Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	<b>Beaufort</b> Birmingham; <b>Granada</b> 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 <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> ; Odeon 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	Odeon Elephant & Castle, <b>Plaza</b> Crosby; <b>Depot</b> Lewes; <b>Cineworld</b> 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.

## Recently Published (details in previous Bulletins)

### The Cinemas of West Wales

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

## North Wales Cinemas Past and Present

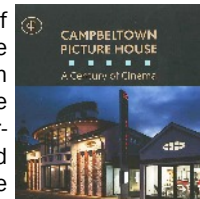
By Alan Phillips. 126 pages, small paperback, fully illustrated in black and white and colour, £6.95 plus postage.

## New Publication

### Campbeltown Picture House – A Century of Cinema.

Paperback, 66 pages, fully illustrated in black and white and colour. £10.00 plus postage.

Published to coincide with the major renovation of the cinema, this very attractive book looks at the remarkable history of the Picture House, which opened in 1913. There are chapters covering the design and architecture of the building, the characters who have worked there, the revival and restoration of the building and a timeline of the cinema. There are details of the various atmospheric style cinemas that there have been in Scotland, a general look at Scottish cinemas and plenty of good photographs. The book has been produced by Campbeltown Community Business and all proceeds go to the ongoing operation of this rare survivor.



### The Wee Pictures

### A History of The Picture House (Campbeltown) Ltd

By Norman S Newton, Paperback, 60 pages, illustrated. £4.99 plus postage.

Although not a new publication, this has not been on general sale before. This is an earlier book about the same cinema at Campbeltown, first published in 1989 and revised in 2008. It contains a more detailed history of the Picture House and its operations and contains many interesting illustrations, including advertisements and playbills.



## 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)

### Scala Cinema 1978- 1993

by Jane Giles, foreword by Stephen Woolley. 424 pages, large size, fully illustrated. ISBN: 978-1-903254-98-1. RRP £75.

Special price to CTA members – £50 + £7.99 UK P&P. Please make cheques for total £57.99 payable to FAB Press, Flat 2 Farleigh, Ramsden Road, Godalming, GU7 1QE (quote CTA on your order)

One of the most infamous and influential of all repertory cinemas, the London Scala's iconic programmes tell their own unique story about culture and society between 1978-1993, a post-punk / pre-Internet period of significant change. 2018 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Scala programme and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the cinema's closure, an ideal time to take stock of a legacy that includes many of today's most exciting filmmakers who've credited the Scala's influence on their work. This book is fully illustrated with all 178 of the Scala's monthly programmes from 1978-1993 and there is a brief history of the building with a small selection of photographs. It explores not only the story of the Scala but its deep roots in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Fitzrovia and pre-WWI King's Cross.

The author will be presenting a copy to the CTA Archive.





# CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

## Grade II\*



The State Grays in April 2004

JD Wetherspoon plc has been granted listed building consent and planning permission for its adaptation of the **State** at Grays into a unit of its chain of hosteleries. Conditions include photographic recording of the building, full restoration of the organ prior to opening and commencement of work within three years. An aspiration has also been expressed by Thurrock Council Regeneration Team that a number of film screenings and organ concerts be held annually.

It is reported that work to the **Electric Palace** in Harwich has been delayed because of the discovery of asbestos in its construction, which perhaps might not have been entirely unexpected in such an aged building. Additional costs involved may impact upon the budget for cosmetic improvements.

## Grade II

Now unfortunately a regular occurrence, a further case of a cinema's closure following the cessation of bingo is that of the **Ritz** in Ilkeston. This is a boldly dynamic edifice both within and without, therefore concern for its future is to be expressed forcefully to its local authority. See coverpic & p22 last Bulletin.

The **Odeon** in Holloway is to undergo major refurbishment, including conversion of one of the small auditoria to a bar and the shops along Holloway Road to a restaurant. It is to be hoped that C Howard Crane's distinguished foyer will be refurbished to replicate at least a degree of its former opulence, which the current blanket coating of white paint visited upon every surface, including the elegant wooden balustrade, has endeavoured to enervate. See p10/11 Bulletin 52/4.

## Unlisted



The rear of the Westover/ABC Bournemouth in June 2006

Following prolonged prompting by the Association, Bournemouth Council intends to extend a Conservation Area to include the Regent and the **Westover** [ABC]. This could augur well for the futures of these two venues, particularly in light of the recent rejection of Libra Homes' appeal against the refusal of planning permission for its proposals for the properties.



The Byron Hucknall on the CTA visit [exterior only] in May 2008

A community group which had been operating within the **Byron** at Hucknall, albeit without a formal lease, has been evicted from the building concurrently with the latter's placement for sale. The CTA was consulted and advised preparation of an application for Asset of Community Value designation. This has now been submitted to the local Council, which regards the cinema as a non-designated heritage asset. A cinema operator reportedly has expressed interest in the possibility of the restitution of film exhibition.

The **Royal** in Deal, a conversion of a former Odd Fellows' Hall of 1892, is threatened with demolition. Communication appertaining to possible concerted action is to be established with the caseworker of The Victorian Society. See p20 last Bulletin.

The scheme for redevelopment of **Pyke's Cinematograph Theatre** at London's Shepherds Bush had included a basement cinema; however, an entertainment space on the more accessible ground floor has now been substituted. It is considered that no action is required.

The **Shaftesbury** at Portsmouth is threatened with demolition. Although of little merit internally, it boasts an impressive Edwardian frontage, which contributes positively to the streetscape. Thus representations will be made to this effect. See p17 Bulletin 52/4.

A fragment of the original façade of the **Futurist** in Scarborough, featuring a cherubic motif, has been salvaged from the demolition site and presented to a local museum. That institution is to be requested to accession the piece officially to prevent casual disposal by the Borough Council at a later date.



The Sandonia Stafford in May 2008

The **Sandonia** in Stafford is slated for imminent demolition and a local enthusiast is proposing reclamation of the façade, possibly for future reassembly at the Crich Tramway Village. Whilst the Association supports such an endeavour in principle, the practicalities, including expense for specialised removal and reconstruction allied with the timescale imposed by the demolition deadline, may weigh against the enterprise.



# WELSH CASEWORK

By John Skinner

## All grade II listed.

CASTLE / FILMCENTA, SWANSEA



The application to the City and County of Swansea in relation to the former **Castle Cinema** was considered and approved on 6 March 2018, at which the CTA was represented. The proposal is for the partial demolition of the roof and internally for conversion into a mixed use development of commercial units on the ground floor at the front and rear with student accommodation in the remainder of the building. The current occupiers, Laserzone, would be required to find alternative premises in the City. CTA Cymru did not object to the proposal as the shell and façade of the building will remain unaltered with a new roof identical to the present one constructed. It was also assured that the planning application includes the re-instatement of the original paybox (currently in storage at the rear of the building) and the wrought iron staircases to the balcony in the former foyer. It was considered that this was the best possible outcome that we could expect in the circumstances, as most of the original interior was lost in the modernisation of the cinema in the 1960s and the roof and ceiling is a replacement of that damaged by wartime bombing. The most impressive feature of the building is the neo-classical façade, which will be retained and restored to its original condition.

ODEON / CLASSIC / ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE /  
THEATR ELLI, LLANELLI



There are plans to redevelop the former cinema and theatre into a multi-purpose entertainment venue to be called **Calon Llanelli** (translated *Heart of Llanelli*) under the direction of enterprising local businessman, William Ratti, who is also a CTA member. The scheme already has full planning and Listed Building Consent approval, which CTA Cymru has fully supported. The building was rather crudely subdivided

into three screens by **Classic** in October 1971, having acquired the cinema from **Odeon** in December 1967. It was taken over by Llanelli Town Council in May 1976 and renamed **Entertainment Centre** and the main auditorium converted for live theatre and films. A further name change was to **Theatr Elli** in 1984 and it closed when the Council recently opened a new purpose-built theatre in the town in 2012 called the **Ffwrnes Theatre** (translated *Furnace Theatre*). The owner has already commenced on restoring many surviving art deco features in the downstairs and balcony foyers and is working to plans based on surviving photographs from the RIBA Archive, taken by Odeon Cinema photographer John Maltby.



A particularly interesting discovery has been the comedy/tragedy masks (above – possibly the work of designer Edward Bainbridge Copnall) which have been uncovered on each side above the entrances to the balcony foyer, on which Mr Ratti is seeking advice on restoration from CADW. This is probably the only surviving examples of Copnall's work and is likely to have been hidden from view for the past 50 years or more. The brass art deco balustrades from the ground floor foyer to the balcony will be restored to their original position. Advice has also been sought from the **Plaza Stockport** on the restoration of the cream faience tiling on the façade, which is at present covered in scaffolding.

The former Screen ① comprising of the balcony extended forward in the tripling will serve as a multi-purpose facility, including cinema (10m wide screen) comedy and dancing and will have a capacity of 250, all in luxury swivel chairs and tables. The former Screen ② (8.5m wide screen) will have a capacity of 150 on sofa-style seating with tables and is planned to open in the spring of 2019 as a full-time cinema along with a café bar. The former Screen ③ will operate as two mini cinemas, each with a capacity of 60 luxuriously restored cast iron **ODEON** seats with coffee tables. In addition, the Christie Organ from the former **Embassy Braintree**, currently in storage, will be restored and installed in front of the stage and cinema screen in the main auditorium. This is the most ambitious and exciting restoration scheme of a former cinema to happen in Wales for some time and deserves to succeed with our full support.

### PALACE, CONWY

After numerous attempts to gain access, Richard Gray managed to get in to view the condition of the now closed cinema in June. Contact has been made with Ashley Whyatt who runs the **New Century** cinema in Sittingbourne and who has been in touch with owners Parker Leisure Holdings of Rhyl to determine whether they are interested in leasing the building to him to reopen as a cinema. The building has been derelict for a number of years after the cessation of bingo and concern is expressed about its condition.

### PLAZA, PORT TALBOT

There is growing concern about the condition of the **Plaza** as it has been in the ownership of Neath Port Talbot Council since 2009 and there has been no progress on finding an appropriate alternative use for the building. At last, there are grounds for encouragement as the Council has received a 'funding in principle' offer of an EU grant of £5.5m through the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Building for the Future' programme. The building is at present screened off by barriers at the front to prevent access by undesirable visitors and it is believed that there is serious water penetration in the auditorium. The Council's Regeneration Officer, Ian Williams, confirms that a tender is out at present for a design and build contractor to redesign the **Plaza** as a business and community hub. Design development will be undertaken in discussion with CADW and Listed Building Consent will be required before any work can begin. A meeting has been arranged with the Officer to clarify the details of current proposals.



# A WANDER AROUND NORTH WARWICKSHIRE

... and beyond! A report of the CTA tour on 16 June, postponed from 3 March due to severe weather  
By Hugh Sykes



The Palace Ibstock, exterior, two views of interior today and [bottom] exterior and interior in the 1980s

We were welcomed onto the coach at Nuneaton station by joint organisers Peter Lea and Richard Norman. At 10:15am promptly we departed northwards and into South Leicestershire for our first visit, to the small town of Ibstock and the **Palace**. Designed by architects Goddard and Wain from Coalville, it was opened on 26 December 1912, built sideways to the High Street with the main entrance a little over halfway along the side wall and a 'pit' entrance (behind the current bus shelter). The auditorium contained raked stalls seating with benches at the front and a small balcony with projection room underneath but no ceiling – just the metal supports for the roof. c1950 KYB; pop 6,000, AWH sound, Props RE & M Ball, 123 High Street, Earl Shilton, 520 seats, one show nightly, twice Saturday, two changes weekly, priced 10d to 1/9. Sadly closing in 1970 with *Jungle Book* it became a bingo club well into the 80s; I visited and photographed the inside whilst in the area, showing the metal beams and brackets in the roof and the former CinemaScope pelmet forward of the pros arch. We were made very welcome by the locals, who on 2nd, 3rd and 4th Saturdays get together for a table top sale, coffee and chat and a gathering of the Ibstock Local History Society Archive.



The 'pit' box office at the Palace

Back on the coach and to Coalville for a visit to the **Century Theatre**, on the Snibston site next to the former NCB colliery. Whilst the Discovery Museum has been closed and demolished, this unusual and very interesting venue is open and run by volunteers. The theatre is different from others in that it is 'portable'. It was designed by John Ridley and built by him with Dick Bull and Rob Robinson in Hinckley between 1948-1952. Donations towards the lightweight aluminium structure cost £22,000 (today about £500,000) from national firms and private



The Century Theatre today

individuals, including Laurence Olivier, John Mills, Enid Blyton and Agatha Christie. The auditorium with 200 seats and stage were built on four 33ft long by 10ft wide ex-military trailers. The floor and ceiling folded up to make the sides of the trailer. Seating was hinged in rows to save space, with floor or roof raised and lowered by hand-operated hydraulic rams, then levelled out with further rams and a rack and pinion under each trailer for uneven ground.

The **Century Theatre** toured from 1952 to 1974 but new road traffic regulations forced it off the road so in 1974 it became the resident theatre in Keswick and stayed there for 22 years until a new theatre was built by Derwent Water. It was acquired by Leicestershire County Council with funding from the Heritage Lottery and other



One of the intact trailers

sources, carefully dismantled and brought home on the back of four low-loaders. It was renovated and reassembled on its present site at Snibston. It was reopened in October 1997 and in 2011 a new front-of-house was built with a mezzanine lounge bar, toilets and full disabled access.

We were welcomed into the lounge area with tea/coffee and biscuits, then an introductory talk, before being invited into the spacious auditorium for an informal history of the project to date, coupled with [digital] film on the screen, which included the movement from Keswick. Afterwards we went backstage, with the dressing room trailers all open for us to inspect. A superb venue for plays, shows, live music and cinema for the locals. It is also the largest item in the County Museum's collection! Plans are afoot to reopen part or all of the colliery site, so we look forward to news on that.

After giving our thanks to the **Century** team, it was a short coach journey into Coalville for three external viewings. The former **Rex** opened on 2 February 1938 with Errol Flynn in *The Charge of the Light Brigade*. It became a twin cinema in May 1973 but closed on 3 May 1984. It was later converted to a retail store for Dunelm, closing only recently.

Just a few doors down is the **Regal**, 2 November 1933 to 14 May 1960. It was converted to Coalville Casino Club from 19 April 1963 and sold in July 1992 to Flutters Bingo Club, which closed suddenly on 1 November 2017. It has recently reopened as the **Palace Bingo Club** and, according to the gentleman on the door, they had "quite a job cleaning the place before reopening".

Lastly, at the other end of Marlborough Square stands the **Emporium**, which originates from the **Coalville Public Hall** of 1876. It later became the **Theatre Royal** and in 1910 was converted to become the **Coalville Electric Theatre** with seating on a single floor. Major alterations in 1920 saw a balcony added and it was re-named the **Grand Cinema** with 900 seats. It was taken over by the Ministry of Food in 1939 for food storage and was used as such until



The former Grand Coalville





The Rex [L] and the Regal [R] Coalville

1953. The Deeming family converted it into a ballroom, which was taken over by Mecca in 1973. It later became a nightclub called Passion, since 2009 renamed the Emporium.

The 1950 KYB lists all three venues:

Grand Cinema, WE sound, props Coalville Theatres Ltd, Man Dir CK Deeming, 919 seats, continuous from 5:30pm, mats Mon & Sat, prices 9d to 2/3.

Regal Theatre, WE sound, props Coalville Theatres Ltd, Man Dir CK Deeming, continuous from 5:30pm, two shows on Sat, prices 9d to 2/3.

Rex, WE sound, props Rex Cinema (Midlands) Ltd, 1,200 seats, prices 9d to 2/3, continuous.

There was also the Olympia cinema, which had opened as a roller skating rink c1908. It became the Olympia Picture House in 1910 but was demolished in 1933 and rebuilt as the Regal, which stands today, retaining the stage with a grid added.

From Coalville, southbound on the coach for Hinckley, passing a little village called Cadeby, a Mecca for narrow-gauge railway fans with its rector, Rev ER (Teddy) Boston. Teddy (a friend of mine until his death in 1986) brought endless pleasure with 2ft gauge *Pixie* steaming around the Rectory gardens on Saturday afternoons – it was lovely; sadly all removed now.



The foyer of the five-screen Cineworld Hinckley

Our first call in Hinckley was the new five-screen **Cineworld**. The kind young manager arranged for us to view screen ② after the matinée had finished. A clear picture (credits) on the screen with no tabs, plain walls with small lighting thereon, modern seating with good sightlines. The manager informed me that business was good and patronage increasing, with lots of people in the foyer. Whilst some members took lunch, a few of us went on a walkabout to see past cinemas:

**Regent/Gaumont/Classic** 11 March 1929 to June 1986. It ran on bingo to 15 June 2013. In May 2014 the auditorium was demolished in favour of a car park and now the frontage is threatened with demolition, the 'tea room' having closed in May this year.

**Danilo/Essoldo/Classic/Cannon** 26 July 1937, tripled as **Classic** ①, ② & ③ in 1972 to closure in July 1993. Sadly, since its use as a sports bar has ceased, the building has become very derelict, although not boarded-up. Two vertical glass signs, one above the entrance and the other on the outside left tower (visible in photo, parallel to lamppost) have been removed. Sadly for some, the coach was unable to stop for a photo session – double yellow lines everywhere.



The Regent [top] and the Danilo [bottom] Hinckley



The George Ballroom

Now there is another building in town, behind the Edwards Centre, which looks like an Odeon, foxing me and others some time back but it's the George Ballroom. Derelict for some years, it is now being restored by a local businessman. The previous entrance has been uncovered and a blue plaque returned to daylight. "Arthur Kimbrell (1908-1986) Hinckley's Mr Show Biz" The George Ballroom's Dance Promoter who brought World Famous Artists to Leicestershire



The Grand Chapel End with our coach outside

Back on the coach and west along the A5 before going cross country towards Nuneaton and the suburb of Chapel End (one-time home of Larry Grayson) and the lovely **Grand**. Opening c1920 with 500 seats all on one level, it was modernised in 1936 with Holophane lighting and new plasterwork. An unusual feature here was an underground car park with entrance to the front stalls. Closing to films in 1961, it was bought by the Deeming family of Coalville and they have left a lovely building in superb condition. The underground car park was later rebuilt with a lounge and bar, kitchen and storage, with a new entrance well and stairs from the centre of the stalls. Sold in 2017 to the present owner, who allowed us to view and photograph freely. Our thanks to the manager for the welcome. 1950 KYB: RCA sound, 500 seats, prices 1/3 to 2/3, continuous Mon-Fri, twice Sat, pros width 24ft.





The interior of the Grand Chapel End

Leaving the Grand we had some spare time so another venue was to be viewed, the Palace Stockingford. The coach duly parked, with a little walk up to Short Street, it still stands, somewhat altered in recent years, with a new roof and new brickwork and doors to the frontage. 1950 KYB: RCA sound, props ST Cinema (Stockingford) Ltd, 343 seats, continuous Mon-Fri, two shows Sat, mats Mon, Thu & Sat, prices 9d to 1/9, pros width 16ft. Opened as the New Picture Palace in 1920 it became the Palace c1942 with closure in 1959, having since been used as a warehouse, later offices; present use unknown.



The former Palace Stockingford

So to Nuneaton and a walking tour. We gave our coach driver a hearty thank you for his excellent services. We started outside the Ritz for a group photo. Sadly boarded-up and awaiting its fate, Peter Lea advised us there is considerable water damage inside, although the roof has received attention. We await developments. It was opened by Union in July 1937, designed by Verity and Beverley with seating for 1,652 patrons; it had a 3-6 Compton organ and illuminated surround and Melotone with Alex Taylor as organist. It became the ABC Ritz in October 1937 then ABC until 1977 when it became EMI. It was leased in the same year to Mr Roy Wyatt, an independent operator, who twinned it in 1980; films ceased in 1985. It reopened in 1986 as the Ritz Luxury Bingo Club, who ran it until 1998 when Gala took over, closing in 2007 and empty since.



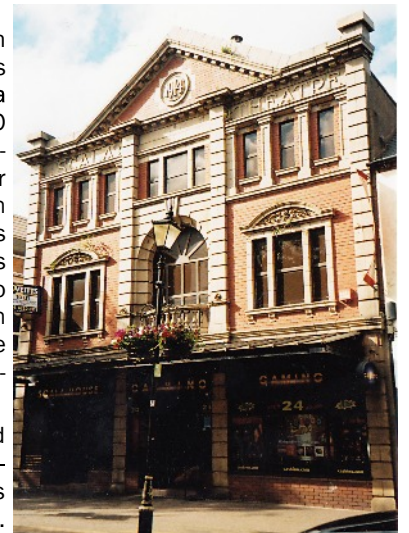
The Ritz Nuneaton

The Compton organ was removed in 1968 to St John Vianney RC Church, Clayhall, Ilford, where it is in full working order today. Concerts are held on a regular basis with the instrument being looked after by the Cinema Organ Society.

Walking down the street, with the local Co-op store and others empty, we came to the Scala Theatre of 1914 with 850 seats. It closed in 1964 for bingo but reopened in 1972 for films for a few years. It was then empty until 1983, when it was gutted and everything was stripped out for rebuilding into offices on the first floor with an amusement arcade on the ground floor and the façade remaining.

The walking party continued to view the former Vint's Picturedrome, currently in use as a gym, as I went to find the car.

So I give my sincere thanks to Peter Lea and Richard Norman for arrangements and organising a really superb day and to our members for their company.



The Scala Theatre Nuneaton

*All above photos by the author*



Group photo taken outside the Ritz Nuneaton by Ian Grundy



# VISIT TO HULL AND BACK WITH AGM

A report of the CTA visit,  
Friday 27 – Sunday 29 June  
By Mike Wood

A little later than previously, the end of June was that time for our Annual General Meeting as required by the Association rules. This year it went to Hull to host us, including a walking tour of the town and afterwards by coach to the surrounding cinema buildings, all organised by David and Margaret Williams.

Little did we know as we signed up for the event that the blazing summer would turn to apocalyptic storms as we journeyed from all corners of the kingdom. Your correspondent had been calmed by the waters of the Peak District only the day before crossing the road to Manchester Piccadilly and the train to the East Riding, which never arrived, as neither did the replacement bus. Luckily I was joined by two members with local knowledge, Nick Taylor and Billy Speight and we set off via Leeds and Bradford with National Express. Sheet lightning, storm force winds and fallen trees blocked the road but we got to Hull just missing the start of an evening presentation by the National Picture Theatre Preservation Trust but glad to have arrived.



The exterior and interior of the New Theatre Hull (1)

Next morning, fortified by a Premier Inn breakfast and with the storm abated, we walked into the City for a tour, David leading one group and Margaret with the other. The first visit was to the Hull New Theatre, which started life as the Assembly Rooms (1834 RH Sharp). Occasional use for film dates from 1910 and it was renamed Assembly Rooms New Picture House in 1919 but cinema use finished the following year. Significant rebuilding to the designs of Robert Cromie and WB Wheatley took place in 1939 for conversion into the New Theatre. Despite some wartime damage, theatre use continued with part-time bingo being introduced in 1961. However, the City Council subsequently purchased the building for sole use as a theatre, with significant alterations carried out over the years, culminating in a major reconstruction for the City of Culture in 2017; it is Listed Grade II. The Technical Manager hosted our full tour showing us the new build stage-house and the refurbished auditorium.



The Cecil Hull (2)

Glancing at the just completed Bonus Arena, unopened at the time of our visit, we arrived at the Cecil (1955 Gelder & Kitchen). This is a post-war rebuild on a site opposite the original cinema Theatre de Luxe of 1911, which became the Cecil Theatre in 1925. Gutted during air raids in 1941, the ruins were eventually cleared in 1953. The replacement cinema opened with the largest CinemaScope screen in the country and also featured an organ by Marshall Sykes. Some sub-division followed soon after with Mecca Bingo taking over the former Stalls. Passing through various operators, the screens closed in 1992, with the larger one becoming a snooker club. Mecca still operates downstairs and its manager kindly allowed us upstairs to view the disused screens and snooker tables still in situ.



The Tower and the Regent Hull (4)



We paused to take a look at the exterior of the Tower (1914 H Percival Binks - Listed Grade II) which is the perfect Bijou picture house. Its baroque revival exterior now features vegetation sprouting from parapets and the rear elevation is careworn. This is a great shame, especially since the local authority went to the trouble of arranging replacement of the two mosaic domes in 2010, the work carried out single-handedly by mosaic artist Paul Bull. Last used as a nightclub, it appears closed.

Opposite is the frontage of the Kinema Picture Palace / Regent (1910 John Dossor) built in just seven weeks. Owned by the same family as the Tower, it closed on film the same day in 1978. After time as a roller disco, it is now a pub in the foyer space, the auditorium having been demolished for a car park.



The exterior and main stage at the Hull Truck Theatre [2]

Passing the railway station and a modern shopping mall on Ferensway, we arrived for a visit at the Hull Truck Theatre in its latest home (2009 Wright & Wright). This started in 1971, moving into a church conversion in 1983 and progressed through ups and downs, becoming well known for its original productions. Public money went into the building of two performance spaces, with the smaller one on occasional film.

A lunch break on our own followed before re-assembling at the Kardomah, which is a performance space and café in the city centre and a perfect size to accommodate us for the AGM. No great drama was played out here that day but the programme had been tweaked to give more time to casework presentations by Gordon Barr and Gary Painter down from Scotland, Richard Gray and Peter Wylde for the long list of English casework, with John Skinner representing Wales. Dean Conrad gave a presentation on his work creating an online map based timeline for cinema history *City of Cinemas: Mapping the Picture Houses of Hull* with the School of Drama, Music and Screen, University of Hull, in association with Hull Independent Cinema and the Media and Memory Research Institute. A digital project but which seemed to go down well with our mostly analogue audience.

The official business concluded, some of us took a peek inside the City Hall (1909 Joseph H Hirst - Listed Grade II\*). Built to impress and originally a concert hall, said to have been designed with input from theatre architect Frank Matcham and an art gallery, now a function room. One of the biggest pipe organs in the country (Forster & Andrews with Philip Selfe) is played regularly but no photographs on the day as a junior chess event was taking place.



The exterior and circle (showing the 'humps') at the Astoria Hull [2]

Sunday dawned a little rainy but our friendly coach driver had parked close by the hotel front entrance and, loaded with luggage for our various onward journeys or homeward bound, we set off for the surrounding area, first stop the Astoria (1934 James E Adamson). Thirty-four cinemas are listed on Cinema Treasures for Hull, of these four are on film, all of which are modern multiplexes but the Astoria has remained open as an independent bingo hall since 1963. It was built for ciné-variety and equipped with a Compton organ, since removed to a museum. It is essentially complete inside, although re-lit and redecorated for bingo and is in immaculate condition including the fully seated Circle, kept so by a group of cheery cleaners, busy when we arrived. That didn't stop them offering us a welcome tea or coffee. Curious humps in the Astoria Circle cross aisle where it met the descending steps from the rear balcony tweaked our interest but soon it was time to leave.



The bomb-damaged façade of the National Picture Theatre Hull [1]

Next stop was for the exterior of the National Picture Theatre (1914 - Listed Grade II). This and five other Hull cinemas were damaged in the 1941 blitz bombing, of which this is the sole survivor and thought to be the last bomb-damaged relic of WWII remaining in the UK. A strong local campaign has been fought to retain it as a memorial of that time against various development plans. The handsome street façade is still reasonably intact.

We stopped outside the Mayfair (1929) which was built with a shallow stage and a Dutch Standaard pipe organ. It closed on film in 1964 in favour of bingo and later continuing as a pub. The rear of the auditorium was demolished at that time and the imposing street façade has been retained with apartments behind. [Photo on next page.]





The Mayfair Hull [1]



The former West Park Hull [1]



The exterior [1] and the foyer [2] of the Parkway Beverley

Dodging the traffic and photos taken, we left for the County town of Beverley by way of a brief stop outside the nine-screen Cineworld, built for UGC in 2009. Beverly was to be our lunch stop and we were dropped at one end of a new retail development, with the Parkway (2016) six-screen cinema at the other. Our comprehensive visit notes included an illustrated history of Beverly's three cinemas, none of which remain in use, so the six-screen independent Parkway is a significant development. The main screen has stage facilities and we had a few minutes to view.



The Carlton Hull [1]

Back into Hull, the attractive brick and stone façade of the Carlton (1928 Blackmore & Sykes) topped by a golden globe provided the next photo opportunity. On bingo since 1967, it closed in 2006 remaining empty but plans are afoot for apartments behind a retained façade.



Behind its classical façade lies the small West Park (1914) which lasted on film until 1959. It has now closed since its last use as a pub but it got some of us onto the central reservation of the busy road for a better look. We had passed the big Langham (1931) which was altered for bowling in 1961 and has seen several other uses since but missing all exterior detail. The Priory (1938) closed for retail use in 1959 and, subsequently suffering fire damage, is just about recognisable as a cinema frontage but a truncated rear contributes to a sad sight.



[L] The side elevation of the former Langham Hull [3]

[R] The former Priory Hull in February 2008 [4]

Despite this and some of the closures and repurposing mentioned earlier, this visit to Hull provided much more interest for us than might be apparent to many and with the friendly welcome from our hosts and the organisational efforts by David and Margaret, it was an interesting and enjoyable event despite the weather; our grateful thanks to you all.

Photos by [1] the author, [2] Kevin Gooding, [3] Dean Conrad, [4] Harry Rigby

**Book:** *Last Complete Performance – in Memory of Hull Cinemas*  
Robert Curry Pevsner Architectural Guides – Hull: David & Susan Neave

**Online:** [cinematreasures.org/theaters/united-kingdom/england/hull]  
[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Closed\_cinemas\_in\_Kingston\_upon\_Hull]

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# TO THE ISLAND – AN EXPLORATION OF GOTLAND

A report of the CTA visit

Sunday 12 August – Saturday 18 August

By Mike Wood

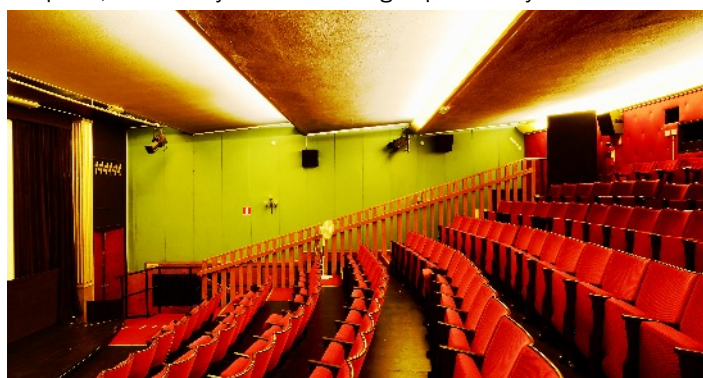
Our foreign visit this year was the much-anticipated return to Sweden and the island of Gotland, via Stockholm, organised by our Swedish members Björn and Anne-Marie Alnebo with a little help from David Trevor-Jones.



The main screen of the Capitol Stockholm [1]

A few took the option of flying direct to the island's airport at Visby but most of us chose to split the journey and re-visit Stockholm on the Sunday late afternoon and travel onwards via the train and ferry from Nynäshamn on Monday. Lucky we did, because this gave us the opportunity to re-visit the Capitol cinema of 1926. When last seen in 2009 it was in use as a rehearsal, recording and performance space for a group of percussionists. Forward to 2016 and a group of cineastes launched a crowd-funding campaign to restore and reinvent the space as a curated cinema experience, our host being CEO Jakob Abrahamsson. Now there is a drop wall two thirds down the hall, which takes the screens in both auditoria; one is on two levels including the original balcony, the other is with the seating extending up into the original proscenium, all achieved with great style and comfort, plus a food offer to complete an evening out.

Next morning, a short walk, train and a Baltic Sea ferry crossing and we disembarked at Visby, Gotland's largest town, a Hanseatic port, UNESCO World Heritage Site and a destination in its own right. Gotland has a history going back beyond medieval times and ruled variously by Vikings, Germans, Danes and now a part of Sweden. The island is mostly given over to agriculture but in July and August it is a popular holiday destination. After commandeering the toy train for the sightseeing tour up through the town to our hotel to check-in for the week, we took the walking tour for an understanding of the history of the place, followed by a meal for our group of twenty-six.



The auditorium of the Folkets Bio Visby [2]

With no apparent ill effects from the beer tasting that followed the welcome meal, we set off the next morning (Tuesday) to walk the cinema sites of Visby starting at the Roxy / Folkets Bio, which opened in 1936 and is now a community-run facility for film and other events. Its 140-seat theatre is on one steeply-raked level and appears mostly original but the projection is now digital, with the two retired film projectors out on display.



The Biostaden Borgen Visby with the lower lobby and recliners [1]



The main screen of the Biostaden Borgen [2]

A short walk found the Biostaden Borgen, originally a community centre of 1958; this was reconstructed as a three-screen cinema in 2009, with more screens added in 2011 and 2018. Operated by the mainstream Svenska Bio chain, this was a stylish modern multiplex with reclining seats in the smaller screens, fully digital of course but still proud to display two of its earlier film projectors in the large foyer space.

Two closed cinema buildings remain in Visby. The Hansa of 1919 is a derelict low building tucked behind some houses, with no obvious clue to its earlier use and closed since 2006. The Röda Kvarn originally opened in 1930 but closed in 2008 and has now been reconstructed internally for hotel use. The hotel kindly let us view inside but there is little to see of its previous existence. This was followed by time on our own to explore more of this picturesque place, with the old town encircled by its ancient walls and its harbour and beach boardwalk providing more of interest to the holidaymakers.



The Rondo Klintehamn [1]





The screen [1] and auditorium [2] of the Rondo Klintehamn

After an unhurried breakfast on Wednesday morning, we boarded our coach for the south of the island, Klintehamn being our first stop for the Rondo. This community hub opened in 1968 as both theatre and cinema in a building that also houses the school. The story told locally is that the bricks came from Russia and included bottles of vodka as a thank-you for buying Russian! In any case, the hall has made a feature of brick patterns and also they are said to provide some measure of acoustic treatment. The cinema features digital projection and surround sound.

Onwards to Burgsvik, almost at the southernmost tip of the island and the Bio, which dates from 1956 and is a conversion from an 18<sup>th</sup> Century stable. It had lapsed into disuse for twenty years until reopening in 1987 as a summer cinema, now with digital projection and the vintage machine on display in the lobby. See group photo on front cover.



The auditorium at the Hemsegården

Retracing our route north a little, we came to the small town of Hemse and the Hemsegården. When built in 1956 it was the largest cinema on Gotland. It has been modernised and also functions as a theatre, dance hall, etc. This was our lunch stop with a couple of places to choose to eat and to stretch our legs.



The exterior of the När Bio [1]

Back on the bus and a short distance to the east of the island is När and the När Bio. Film came to this little settlement in the 1930s with outdoor showings, moving into the community centre in 1949, which remains home to the cinema. The projection box retains what looks like the original Zeiss Ikon Ernemann projector alongside the Barco. A little further on along a spit of land is Närsholmen, the location for a key scene in *Sacrifice*, Russian director Andrei Tarkovsky's final film. Perhaps a little esoteric for some but it fitted alongside the story of the iconic Swedish film director Ingmar Bergman, of which more later.



The Garda Bio [1]

With a little time to spare, the visit to Garda was brought forward and we arrived at the Garda Bio to find our cheerful host at När waiting to greet us again, apparently he runs both as summer season cinemas. The Garda hall pre-dates När by just one year (1948) and is larger, with one unique feature being a pub beneath the stage. This snug members' hideaway opens after each performance, purely for intellectual discussion of the preceding feature film, of course. Thursday was a later start for an unscheduled first stop at the Roma Abbey open air theatre, which is a seasonal setting for plays in the atmospheric abbey ruins. The manor house and outbuildings provide a museum, café and shop to explore and the terminus of a narrow gauge steam heritage railway across the fields but no trains running when we visited.



The interior of the Katthammarsviks Bio [2]

Next stop was to the Katthammarsviks Bio in the small village of the same name on the East coast. This community centre also houses a museum about the German battleship Albatross lost in 1915 but for us it was the wonderful collection of film paraphernalia acquired by Rune Olofsson. Rune married the young woman who sold him the





The exterior of the Katthammarsviks Bio [1]

ticket to his first film show there in 1942. Rune stayed on as projectionist for nearly sixty years and members of his family are still involved with the cinema. Our host played a touching short documentary featuring Rune and his time at the Bio. After a good look at the extraordinary collection of film equipment upstairs, it was time to relocate to a nice beachside cafe for lunch.



The exterior and interior of the Sliteteatern [1]

Some way further up the coast is the town of Slite near the cement works, Gotland's only other industry and location of the Sliteteatern, our last visit of the day. It dates from 1954 and it has the largest screen on the island and is now digital, as elsewhere, with an AGA-Baltic film projector of the period on guard in the foyer. The cinema interior is mostly original but very well maintained and with some new seats installed of the total of 350.



The interior of the Roy in Fårösund [1]



The exterior of the Roy in Fårösund [1]

Friday was our last touring day and we set off for the Roy in Fårösund. Its story is that of Tage Eriksson, a young builder doing military service nearby in 1940, who saw that the cinema was only half built and asked the owner if he could finish it in his spare time. The military gave him more time off and extra help and it opened in October of that year. A young couple from the mainland now own it and run it as a summer cinema.



The Sudersands Bio in Fårö [2]

A swift ferry crossing took us to the northernmost island of Fårö and the Sudersands Bio opened in 1954. This was a hay barn and, when the last cow died, the owner decided to turn it into a cinema, doing the work himself, including making the seats still in use today



The three little privies

and probably also the coffee shack and the three little privies across the yard. The summer volunteer came out to greet us along with her assistant, aged about six months, also smiling. Apparently he charms the customers when there's a hiccup in the show.

After a lunch stop, we drove on out to Ingmar Bergman's own cinema at Dämba. Previously he had viewed the rushes at the Sudersands Bio but he had his own built in 1975. As befits the revered Swedish film director, there is an annual festival; nearby is the Bergman Centre and also his house by the beach. Along the way, we stopped at the beach with strange weathered stone outcrops that are a feature of this coastline and made a brief stop at the churchyard where his grave is marked with a simple stone; this pilgrimage marking the end of our visit and it was ferry and train back to Stockholm the next morning.

This was an altogether delightful visit, not because of any great architectural or technical attributes for most of the venues but each one told a good story and for the friendly welcome shown by all of our hosts, often volunteers, who shared with us their enthusiasm and love of film. Thank-you to all of them, to our cheerful coach driver and to Björn and Anne-Marie for making our visit possible.

Photos by [1] the author [2] Elaine Harwood

#### Links for more:

Capitol Stockholm: *Screen Daily* page at [tinyurl.com/ydad5lch]  
 Biostaden Borgen Visby: [tinyurl.com/ycz2cwb4]  
 Folkets Bio Visby: [cinematreaures.org/theaters/58382]  
 Dresden Science Museum in the old Erнемann factory where they run film on old projectors in their own Kino – German website : [tinyurl.com/yawuy8hp]  
 The Sacrifice Andrei Tarkovsky re-release trailer: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=ODJb2-Plu7y]



## REWINDING BACK

By David A Ellis

### 3,000 PEOPLE SEE A 'RAINSTORM'

Nearly 3,000 people watched the experimental transmission of the Derby at the **Metropole** cinema, Victoria, London yesterday, the demonstration being arranged by Mr JL Baird, the television expert. The experiment had been elaborately arranged, with transmitting apparatus placed opposite the grandstand at Epsom. The resultant signals passed along six cables laid under the course and the pictures, divided into three zones, were projected at the cinema by means of a revolving mirror drum onto the screen. An official frankly described the result as "something like a rainstorm" although the horses were clearly seen at intervals. As a scientific achievement, the demonstration was a great success.

*Edinburgh Evening News – 2 June 1932*

### DEATH OF LANCASTER CINEMA HEAD

One of the best known figures in the cinema industry in the North West, Mr John Beck, died at his home in Greycourt, St Mary's Gate, Lancaster yesterday aged 61. Mr Beck had not been in the best of health for some months and had been seriously ill for about ten days.



The County Lancaster shortly after closure in 1956

He had a romantic career, rising from an ordinary operator in his native town, Rochdale, in the early days of the cinema, about 1905, to the general managership of the **Hippodrome** (Lancaster) Ltd, which controls four out of the six cinema in the town, the **Palace**, **County**, **Grand** and **Kingsway**.

Mr Beck, after going from Rochdale to Rhyl as an operator, became operator at the **Whitehall** Cinema Blackpool in 1912 and within a few weeks was manager of this cinema. Later he took over in addition the managership of the **King Edward** and **Tivoli** cinemas, two other halls in the same circuit and afterwards started a booking circuit that included four Blackpool cinemas, the three he had previously controlled and the **Palladium** and the four Lancaster cinemas of which he was manager at his death, thus booking films for eight halls simultaneously in one period.

In 1932 he broke his connection with Blackpool for health reasons and took over in April as general manager of the Lancaster Company. Mr Beck was exceedingly well-known in the trade and can be counted among its pioneers in this country. He is survived by his wife and a married daughter, who lives in Blackpool.

*Lancashire Daily Post – Thursday 14 February 1935.*

### CHESTER GAUMONT PALACE MANAGER RETIRES

Mr FD Rowley, who for ten years has been manager of the **Gaumont Palace**, is retiring on 3 May. Mr Rowley has been associated with Chester entertainments for over 20 years and became the manager of the **Gaumont** upon its opening in 1931. He has been active in the organisation of concerts and other forms of entertainment and was one of the promoters of Sunday concerts, which have in the City on behalf of the troops. Mr Rowley, who has not been in good health for some time, is going away to recuperate.

*Cheshire Observer – 3 May 1941*

## REGENT REBUILD RUMOURS

by Mike Whitcombe

It hardly seems possible that it's now more than two and a half years since fire ravaged the beautiful art deco single-screen **Regent** cinema in Lyme Regis, Dorset. The grade II listed cinema, that sits at the top of Broad Street and backs onto the graceful Langmoor and Lister gardens that offer spectacular views of the famous Cobb and Lyme Bay, was designed by Bristol based architect William Henry Watkins, who designed several other south west cinemas including the **Forum** in Bath. It opened in 1937 and was run by local cinema operator Donald Hardy, who oversaw operations until the 1970s.

The cinema made national headlines when fire struck at lunchtime on 22 March 2016. Fifty firefighters from eight fire crews dispatched from three counties battled the ferocious blaze that was caused by a faulty light fitting. The fire, which completely destroyed the auditorium, broke out shortly after an extensive refurbishment of the building had been completed. During this work new fire doors were installed between the auditorium and the entrance foyer. These doors saved the original art deco foyer, leaving the frontage of the building virtually unscathed. In fact standing outside the cinema entrance today it's impossible to tell that there was even a fire, let alone a fire that engulfed and completely destroyed an auditorium so beloved by generations of patrons.



In the days immediately after the fire the owners Scott Cinemas declared that rebuilding would take place and the residents of Lyme, as well as the thousands of holiday makers who annually visit this Dorset seaside town, would soon have a rebuilt picture palace at which to watch the latest blockbuster. Architects Northern Building Design Associate (NBDA Ltd) were hired but their first proposal to rebuild the cinema did not meet the required design or financial criteria. In January 2018 it was announced that a second proposal was at the 'in principle' consultation stage with county planners and English Heritage.

In between these two proposals, in April 2017, the Barnstaple based Scott Cinema chain merged with Cornwall based WTW to form WTW-Scott Cinemas. One of their first announcements was that the rebuilding of the **Regent** was a priority. But in March 2018 rumours began circulating around Lyme Regis that WTW-Scott Cinemas were frustrated at their failure to begin rebuilding and that they were prepared to sell this prime location site. There would be no **Regent** rebuild, the rumours claimed. Instead, the site would be sold for alternative development, which in Lyme meant holiday flats. This caused WTW-Scott Cinemas to issue an immediate press release siting "regrettable delays" in regard to the rebuild. "We are doing everything we can to get the cinema back in Lyme Regis," said the statement, "and as soon as our proposal is accepted we will start the rebuild. A third proposal for the **Regent** is now being considered and Lyme Regis Town Council is being kept informed with developments."

Six months on and there is still no sign of a rebuild. Cinema goes in a town that once hosted Hollywood megastars Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons when they filmed the 1981 masterpiece *The French Lieutenant's Woman* are still hoping the rebuild will begin sooner rather than later. In the words of one Lyme resident: "We want our cinema back!"

*Photo taken 16 September 2018*



# A CINEMA OF MY OWN

## By Fabian Breckels

A few years ago there were quite a few articles on home cinema rooms created by CTA members and their friends. I had, for years, toyed with converting my loft but always procrastinated. Eventually I bit the bullet and as a result, the Loft Cinema Redfield, opened its doors (or rather loft hatch) on 16 June 2018.



The ribbon was cut by children's author Marc Grimston<sup>1</sup> [above] before the opening films, a double bill of the original *Swallows and Amazons* [U] and *An Elephant Called Slowly* [U]. These were the first films I ever saw in the ABC Colchester back in 1974; it's now a Wetherspoons pub.

Given this is a small space (the loft of a mid-terraced small house in East Bristol) I decided to go for the look and feel of the smaller cinema screens I'd often see films in while growing up in the 1970s and 1980s. Let's face it, Art Deco in a room about 4m by 3m would look excessive!

So, while one loft company put in flooring and insulation; then had to come back and put a proper suspended floor in to meet building regs (that took months to sort out); someone else came in and dry-lined it and a local carpenter put a proper vomitory in over the loft hatch; I had plenty of time to work out the colour scheme and design.

This is the end result:



The front resembles so many of the 'mini' cinemas I watched some of my favourite films in. Complete with the carpeted slope up to the screen and the 'ventilation grille' that in reality hides the central speaker of my sound system.

<sup>1</sup> If you'd like to know more about Marc Grimston's books, his books are available on Amazon at: [\[www.amazon.co.uk/Marc-Grimston/e/B006ZK8IOE\]](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Marc-Grimston/e/B006ZK8IOE)

Purple and red are great colours from that era and purple is a recommended colour for a cinema room, a local supplier had suitably mottled red carpet while a friend from church adapted the red screen curtains to fit and made the purple curtaining that conceals the under eaves storage and completes the look.

I had planned to put the projector in the alcove above the rear seats; but one with that throw would have broken the bank. As the ceiling was also too low for a ceiling mounted projector I decided the safest option was to install it in a table in front of the seats. I managed to get two matching pairs of seats from an antiques dealer and built the riser myself, ably assisted by suppliers who provided timber cut to size. The under-stair strip lights that I had fitted under each end of the riser prevent anyone tripping if they need to move while a film is on. As the seats did not have aisle ends I built the side tables myself out of MDF and these double up as drinks tables.



[L] View from the screen end; [R] with the tabs open

Trying to put any kind of cinema room in a constrained space was a challenge and some compromise was inevitable. I'd originally conceived it the other way round with the screen in the alcove (which is between two chimneys) but that was before 16:9 projectors and screens were commonplace. Flipping the room round meant a much bigger screen and better space around the seats. My advice is don't go over the top with the décor if space is limited. There is some fine tuning still to do but there were some successes – an electrician friend of mine wired the exit sign so it stays on when the house lights are dimmed! It might be small but it's a very nice space to watch films in.

## HOLIDAY SNAP



The Kino K-13 auditorium is located in an old brick storehouse in Helsinki's Katajanokka [Finland]. The auditorium was designed by Partanen & Lamusuo Partnership. The 150 comfortable seats also come with individual fold-out tables. The equipment includes a Barco 2k digital projector, Dolby Digital 51 sound and a 35mm projector. [\[ses.fi/cinema-kinok13\]](http://ses.fi/cinema-kinok13)

Sent in by John Kennett



## EVEN MORE WANDERINGS – PART 2

By Hugh Sykes



The former Regal Oswestry and the Picture House Ruthin

2018 visits started late, on 3 February, seeing our relations in Llay, so down the road to Oswestry to see what's left. The Regal / Granada / Regal was then open as The Original Factory Shop. As we know, there's nothing left of the cinema inside. The Kings/Granada/bingo site is open as a Wilko store, a totally gutted and extended property. The main entrance used to have steps up to the cinema foyer doors – all gone. I noted a railway painting on the side wall – it continues across the street onto the former Woolworth's building, a lovely Cambrian 4-4-0 [photo on p27]. Digital film is shown in the small Kinoculture. There was mention in the Bulletin about reopening a former Salvation Army hall as a two-screen cinema.<sup>1</sup> The final visit was to Ruthin for the Picture House, latterly on antiques but now sadly boarded-up.



The former Palladium Midsomer Norton

15 March was a trip down into Avon and Somerset to visit the lovely town of Midsomer Norton – and a surprise. Whilst the original Palladium remains shuttered and out of use<sup>2</sup>, the name has gone to the Town Hall where one can see films again.

<sup>1</sup> See p24 last Bulletin

<sup>2</sup> Now converted into a Wetherspoon's – see Newsreel p25



The Northern Lights cinema at Wirksworth

On 12 May Ann and I ventured into Derbyshire, calling in at Belper. The local butcher sells potted beef – a quarter (dollop) was purchased. The Ritz continues with bingo downstairs. Up to Peak Rail for the Heritage Shunters Gala – something a little different – then afterwards to Wirksworth to see the recently opened Northern Lights; it was not open on our visit (late pm). We walked down to see the former Cinema, which still stands, although the converted frontage shop was not in use. A builder's merchant operates in the yard behind the auditorium.



The Millennium Theatre Cardiff

On 18 May we were invited down to Cardiff for seats to see *The Last Ship* with Sting's music at the Millennium Theatre in Cardiff Bay. In my eyes, not the most beautiful of buildings externally but the 1,925-seat auditorium is a gem. The story is about the last shipyard in the days after the miners' strike and the hardships of the population, with some really powerful music and song. We thoroughly enjoyed the experience, giving the cast and musicians a well-deserved standing ovation. Sadly, if there were 450 in the audience in that truly lovely theatre that night. I felt sorry for all the team.

We came home via Aberdare the next day to see the replacement building on the site of the lamented Palladium. A Family Shopper store with flats above. The BT phonebox and Royal Mail postbox both remain as before but no blue plaque! The Aberdare Constitutional / Palace of Varieties / Empire / Pictorium remains at the top of the street.

We also called in to see a hidden Ruston 2ft gauge 4WD diesel at a local garage and were made very welcome by the proprietor.

On the Bank Holiday weekend of 26 May to Barmouth and Blaenau Ffestiniog. With little or no traffic the roads were clear and we even got a parking spot by Barmouth Lifeboat Station, usually crowded. No original cinemas remain, the Pavilion closing c1972/3 and demolished for a car park. There is a nite spot and amusement arcade next door. The White Cinema site looks as though a smaller hall was built there. The Dragon Theatre is open occasionally for film – it was having a table top sale in a back room; we came back with a plant for the garden.



The former Palladium Aberdare





The CellB cinema in the old police building in Blaenau Ffestiniog

Up (in the rain) to Blaenau Ffestiniog and the CellB cinema. We found it open with the latest releases, converted from a former County Police building, via a side entrance. We came home via Betws-y-Coed – that's where all the people and coach parties were! A short visit to the Conwy Valley Railway Museum was taken before heading east.



The Angles Theatre, the Luxe cinema and the Empire in Wisbech



The six-screen Light cinema Wisbech

2 June was the end of the spring holiday visit to west Norfolk and firstly to Hunstanton after an early home departure. We had the town to ourselves at first, then the crowds came, after the rain had stopped. The Princess Theatre had a full page advert in the paper, mostly one-night shows. We headed home via Emneth where Rev Awdry and Thomas the Tank Engine originated. From there into Wisbech where all four venues were found. The Angles Theatre with 112 seats can project digital but has mostly local stage shows. The Luxe cinema in a side street is fully open. A single screen in a lovely auditorium. The staff were most helpful with a film list and view therein; the midday matinee had just finished. The Empire Theatre was fully open for Winners Bingo Club. The Light cinema experience, all screens open, including the lower studios ① & ②. A very deep foyer with retail park adjacent. If coming into Wisbech off the A47 from Peterborough, look for Tesco on the left, just afterwards there is a large car park on the frontage.



And finally, I attended a concert at The Barn near Cannock featuring Cameron Lloyd and Damen Willets at the Compton from the Picture House Douglas IOM, a 3-10 including additions and an illuminated surround. The other console is the ex Regal Golders Green 2-6 Wurlitzer, now connected to the Compton. The rank of pipes at the back of the Wurlitzer are very rare, stamped 'I' are the Vox Humana from the Barbieri organ of the Regal Leamington Spa, removed in 1956.



The final photo is the former Picture House Heath Hayes, Staffs, currently GEM carpets and bedroom furniture and very much rebuilt. c1950 props Executors of the late Thos Jervis, 475 seats, continuous Mon, Thu & Sat, once nightly Tue, Wed & Fri, prices 9d to 1/9, three changes weekly.

*All photos by the author*



# 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]

## ADDLESTONE (Surrey)

A new six-screen Light cinema was opened on 5 October in the Addlestone One development in Station Road. It will be the tenth UK cinema for the group. A preview open day was held on 29 September.

*Surrey Live – 25 September*

## ASHFORD (Kent)

A structural survey is being carried out at the former Odeon to see if it contains asbestos. The Council, which bought the building last year, ordered the survey. It has also commissioned “specialist cultural expertise” to look at the business case to turn it into a theatre. {14785}

*Kent Online – 19 October; sent in by Philip Stevens*

## BANBURY (Oxon)

On a visit to Banbury in August, we noted workmen inside the former Grand. I could see that the auditorium is completely wrecked, with very large gaps in the brickwork on the right hand side and steelwork holding up the structure. A great loss. It looks as if it is going to become flats, with the frontage and roof remaining. Does any member have internal photographs?

*Sent in by Hugh Sykes*

## BATH (North Somerset)

A new cinema in the Southgate Centre was granted a licence after “grave concerns” over child safety were expressed; the applicants withdrew their request to allow babies under 24-months into [15] and [18] ‘parent and child’ screenings. Conflicting reports give the capacity as 217 seats over four screens and 450 people over five screens. It is scheduled to open in December and be operated by T4051 Ltd; it will be called the Tivoli. See also entry for Cheltenham below & Business p28.

*[somersetlive.co.uk] – 17, 25 September; The Times – 20 September; sent in by Raymond Dolling*

## BEESTON (Notts)

Planning permission has been granted for a new cinema in the town centre. Work is expected to start next year. No further details or operator have been given.

*East Midland Business Link – 13 September; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

## BIRMINGHAM (Central)



Actor Brian Blessed (OBE) made a solo outing on Thursday 13 September, with a dramatic entrance at the Old Rep Theatre, Brian arrived at the theatre to inspect the seat that is now named after him and told many anecdotes of his time when he trod the boards at the theatre in 1960. Continuing the celebrations of the Old Rep's 105<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the team have installed a number of seat plaques dedicated to notable actors and theatre makers whose careers were developed in the iconic venue including Sir Brian Cox, Sir Barry Jackson and Toyah Willcox. Blessed, now 81, made the visit after having just returned from Russia where he's completed training to go in to space one day.

*Theatre Press Release – 15 September; sent in by Gary Stevens*

The Odeon Broadway Plaza (ex AMC) has reopened as an Odeon Luxe. It features 1,264 hand-made seats (cf 2,800 before) across its twelve refurbished screens. There is a 204-seat iSense screen with 4k digital projection and Dolby Atmos sound; all standard screens have Dolby 7.1 surround sound. {24150}

*Sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## BIRMINGHAM (Harborne)

The grade II listed former Royalty suffered a serious fire on 19 September; arson is suspected. The blaze came just days after a public meeting was held to discuss turning it into a community building. The cinema opened in October 1930 and films ceased in November 1963. It was a bingo hall until 2012. An 11 minute video from March 2017 by Urban Explorers is at [youtu.be/Kyrzk55lXa0]; there is no suggestion that they had anything to do with the fire. {33866}

*Birmingham Post, Express & Star – 20 September, 4 October; sent in by Chris Ingram via Carl Chesworth & R David Simpson*

## BLACKPOOL (Lancs)

The company that runs Funny Girls has gone into administration with debts of £4.34m. A licence has been granted to Blackburn-based brewery Thwaites, who will continue to run the venue for the time being. Owner Basil Newby MBE has been suffering from ill health. The venue is housed in the 1939 grade II listed former Odeon. {1833}

*Blackpool Gazette – 5 September; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## BOURNEMOUTH

A developer's bid to build flats on the sites of the former Odeon and ABC in Westover Road has been thrown out on appeal. Libra Homes had planned to keep the façade of the Odeon but replace most of the rest with a high-rise building. The total price paid for both cinemas was £6.15m. A historic building consultant has been allowed into the Odeon to take photos of what remains of the 1929 building, which opened as the 2,267-seat Regent; these can be seen at: [tinyurl.com/yd2kn8m3]. {24207} {20081}

*Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 29 September; sent in by Carl Chesworth, RW Hawkins, John R Forster & John West*

## BRIGHTON

The Kingswest Odeon closed suddenly without warning in early October. A spokesman said there were “technical issues” with a fire alarm. Patrons were angry, especially those with ‘unlimited card’ membership. The closure lasted two weeks. {20676}

*The Argus, Brighton – 15, 18 October; sent in by Geoff Gill*

## BURNLEY (Lancs)

A fire broke out inside the former Empire in the early hours of 22 October; arson is suspected. It has been described as a “heritage crime” by bosses of the Theatres Trust, who have been working with the Burnley Empire Theatre Trust to protect it and secure its future. The incident comes just seven days before the theatre celebrates its 124 year anniversary after the venue first opened with a variety show on 29 October 1894. {36755}

*Lancashire Telegraph – 22 October; sent in by Philip Crompton*

## BURY ST EDMUNDS (Suffolk)

Pat Church writes: The Abbeygate Cinema is currently undergoing a transformation into a four-screen unit complimented by an enlarged restaurant area. For me it's a lifetime's work come to fruition after being here 52 years as projectionist then general manager, now semi-retired and just ‘casual manager’. Watch this space as the attached bingo hall finally comes back into being a cinema.



*Photo by Pat Church*

## CAERNARFON (Gwynedd)

The two new screens at Galeri Caernarfon Cyf opened on 21 September. The 119 and 65 seat screens complement the existing 394-seat main auditorium. {31746}

*North Wales Chronicle – 2 September; Daily Post, Wales – 3 September; sent in by Carl Chesworth*



## CANTERBURY (Kent)

Curzon is to be the operator of a new five-screen cinema, part of the Kingsmead regeneration. The chain insists their existing three-screen cinema in Westgate Hall Road will remain open. No timescale for the development has been given.

*Kent Online – 18 October; sent in by Philip Stevens*

## CARDIFF



The former Gaiety is set to be demolished. It opened in 1912 with 800 seats and was remodelled in 1934 to 1,518 seats. Films ceased in 1961 in favour of bingo, which itself ceased in 1998. It later became a ten-pin bowling alley but that closed in 2006 and the building has been empty since.

*Wales Online – 23 October; photo taken August 2007*

## CHELTENHAM (Glos)

Plans have been approved for a five-screen 'boutique' cinema as part of the Regent Arcade redevelopment. It will be in the space previously occupied by British Home Stores and is expected to open by the end of 2019. It will be operated by Tivoli – see also entry for Bath above.

*Gloucestershire Live – 15, 19 October*

## CHESTERFIELD (Derbys)

Work has begun to improve the facilities at the Winding Wheel (ex Odeon), which is owned and operated by the Council. Costing £745,000 the work will see the foyer transformed and some of the facilities inside modernised. A café/bar will extend into a former shop next door. {22413}

*Sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## CHIPPENHAM (Wilts)



David Reeves writes: The three new screens ③, ④ & ⑤ at the Astoria/Reel opened on Tuesday 18 September in the old bingo area (former stalls seating). I had a quick look prior to this and I have to say that Reel has carried out an impressive transformation of the cinema with a new concessions area, toilets, waiting area with seating and tables and a disabled lift for access to the new screens. Screen ③ has 71 seats, screen ④ has 90 seats and screen ⑤ has 119 seats – this screen takes in the old stage area and the space that afforded has been used and transformed to a very high standard. Interesting thought (to me) there is now a screen back in the Astoria stage area for the first time in 51 years when Star Cinemas first converted it to a bingo hall downstairs and cinema in the old circle area. Prior to that

the first CinemaScope screen had been installed in that stage area with 4-track stereo in 1954 with *The Robe* being the opening film. The existing two screens in the old circle area will be modernised and upgraded over the coming weeks to give 131 seats in screen ① and 139 seats in screen ②, expected opening date mid-November. Will send a more detailed piece when this happens.

*Photo by David Reeves*

## CLEVEDON (North Somerset)

The grade II listed Curzon has been unsuccessful in a bid for £2.6m of Lottery funding. The 1920s building is in desperate need of roof repairs as the tiles are becoming very fragile. Stonework and windows are in a poor state. Plans to restore the interior, including the removal of a false ceiling and revelation of the barrel-vaulted ceiling and proscenium arch will now have to wait. {846}

*North Somerset Times – 3 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## CREWE (Cheshire)

Empire cinemas is to open a new 800-seat eight-screen multiplex in the town centre. There will be a 230-seat 'impact' screen and a 17-seat D-box auditorium with moving seats. Work is expected to start in late summer 2019 and be complete by summer 2021. The town already has a five-screen Odeon (ex Reel).

*Crewe Chronicle – 26 September*

## CROMARTY (Highland)

Planning permission has been granted for a 30-35-seat cinema on the seafront. See p20 last Bulletin.

*Press & Journal, Daily Star – 6 September;  
Inverness Courier, Ross-shire Journal – 14 September*

## DAVENTRY (Northants)

Fresh plans have been unveiled for a new cinema. It would have three or four screens and be on land north of the High Street, the current site of Daventry library. The auditoria would have 120, 160 and 110 seats and the possible fourth screen 110 seats also. The Council is in discussions with potential operators.

*Daventry Express, East Midland Business Link – 4 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

## DERBY

The Odeon (ex UCI) has become an Odeon Luxe. It now has 703 hand-made seats across 10 upgraded screens, compared with 1,870 before. One screen is an iSense screen with 103 seats, 4k digital projectors and Dolby Atmos sound; the screen is taller than a double-decker bus. {21128}

*Derby Telegraph – 3 September; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## DEVONPORT (Plymouth)

Fresh plans have been submitted for the 360° cinema proposed for the grade II listed Market Hall. It is hoped it could be open in 2019. See p19 Bulletin 52/3.

*The Herald, Plymouth – 11 September*

## DURHAM



The former Majestic has celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. It opened in August 1938 with 906 seats and films finished in December 1961 in favour of bingo, which remains today. One of the bingo callers has put together an exhibition of memorabilia – see a page from the *Northern Echo* at [tinyurl.com/ya4kbm6z]. {47268}

*Northern Echo – 4 September; photo taken November 2006*



### EDINBURGH (Leith)

Planning permission has been granted to turn the category B-listed former State into 36 apartments. The façade will be retained. The cinema opened in December 1938 and closed in 1972; it has since been used as a bingo hall, nightclub and a church. {23261}

*Daily Business – 21 October*

### FORDINGBRIDGE (Hants)

The reopened Regal has celebrated its first anniversary. The 30-seat cinema has 4k projection and Dolby Atmos sound. {37771}

*Your Valley News – 1 August*

### FORT WILLIAM (Highland)

An architect has been appointed to design a new two-screen cinema. If the plan goes ahead, the 1970s former two-screen Studio cinema in Cameron Square will be demolished and a new building erected on the site. The auditoria will seat 98 and 70. Work to demolish the old building is expected to begin in January 2019.

*Glasgow Herald – 6 September; Press & Journal – 16 September, 4 October*

### GLASGOW (Central)

A new Everyman opened in Princes Square on 26 October with more than 200 seats across three screens. The seating capacities are 95, 71 & 38.

*Scottish Sun – 27 September; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

### GRIMSBY (North East Lincs)

The Whitgift Film Theatre inside the John Whitgift Academy closed suddenly in July after 46 years. The closure was announced during the interval of a live showing of an André Rieu concert – no reason was given. It is thought that the equipment will remain unused. A multiplex is due to be built in the town. {24710}

*Grimsby Telegraph – 31 July*

### GUERNSEY

A planning application has been submitted for a development including a cinema at Admiral's Park. The application comes just two weeks before previously granted outline planning permission was due to expire.

*Guernsey Press & Star – 13 August*

### HEMEL HEMPSTEAD (Herts)

An eleven-screen cinema with 1,185 seats is to be built at The Marlowes shopping centre. The town already has a seventeen-screen Cineworld (ex Odeon/Empire).

*Hemel Hempstead Gazette – 12 September*

### HORSHAM (West Sussex)



Consultants have been appointed to review future plans for the Capitol Theatre following proposals to open a new Everyman cinema in the town. The building opened as the Ritz in June 1936 and closed in June 1982. It was acquired by the Council and became the Horsham Arts Centre in December 1984. In 2002/3 it had a £6m refurbishment and became the Capitol. {3263} *Photo above taken March 2009.*

*West Sussex County Times – 13 September; sent in by Norman Pemberton*

### HULL (East Yorks)

More detail has been released about the conversion of the ten-screen Odeon into an Odeon Luxe. Screens ⑤ (150 seats) and ⑨ (143 seats) will become iSense screens, with 4k digital projection and Dolby Atmos sound. Planning permission for new signage has been granted. It closed for a short period from 22 October to complete the refurbishment. {24774}

*Hull Daily Mail – 16 September*

### ILKLEY (West Yorks)

A second screen has opened at Ilkley Cinema. It has extended into the adjoining first floor space to create a 41-seat auditorium, which backs onto the existing 57-seat screen. The interiors were created by the same designer as screen ① with sofas and cushions. {50929}

*Ilkley Gazette – 30 August*

### IPSWICH (Suffolk)

Hope Church has completed its purchase of the former Odeon, which has been empty for the past 13 years. The Church plans to transform the building into a place to host its growing congregation with a large auditorium plus extra rooms for children and workshops. It also plans to create a community facility to serve the town throughout the week. See p21 Bulletin 52/3. {13679}

*Ipswich Star – 20 September; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

### KNUTSFORD (Cheshire)

The two new screens at the Curzon have been named Cranford and Marcliff. See p22 last Bulletin.

*Knutsford Guardian – 4 October*

### LEEDS (West Yorks)



Planning permission has been granted for an £18m redevelopment of the 1,558-seat grade II\* listed Grand Theatre, home to Opera North. The plans include taking over four vacant shop units adjacent to the theatre to create a new restaurant and bar. It will also incorporate a new entrance to the 300-seat Howard Assembly Room (used as the Plaza cinema until 1985). The buildings had an extensive 18-month £31.5m refurbishment in 2005/6. {47981} {24955}

*The Stage – 13 September; sent in by Barry Quinton; photo taken October 2004*

### LIVERPOOL (Crosby)

It is planned to install a Wurlitzer organ in the Plaza Community Cinema. This organ was originally installed in the Ritz Ipswich in 1937 and later spent several years at the Hollywood Plaza Cinema, Scarborough, so this will be its third cinema location. The Plaza originally had a Compton organ, which is now installed at the home of organist David Redfern in Belper, Derbyshire. This organ has the distinction of being the last Compton theatre organ to be installed in a cinema.

*Sent in by Jeremy Buck*

### LIVERPOOL (Netherton)

The Odeon at Switch Island is to become an Odeon Luxe. When completed it will have 859 seats across its twelve upgraded screens, compared with the present 2,463. It will include an iSense screen. Reopening is scheduled for late November.

*Liverpool Echo – 9 October*

### LLANELLI (Carmarthen)

Full planning permission has been given to proposed renovations at the former Odeon / Theatr Elli. The upstairs will become a 200-250-seat luxury cinema, which can also be used for dining (400), seated concerts (750) or live music with standing (900-1,000). There will be three cinema screens on the ground floor. The proposals are all about retaining and reinstating original features, whilst giving the building a sustainable future. Work is expected to begin before the end of the year. Plans can be seen at [tinyurl.com/y8cq67xx](http://tinyurl.com/y8cq67xx) {7304}

*Wales Online – 11 September; see Welsh Casework p6*



### LONDON (Alexandra Palace)

The Alexandra Palace Theatre is due to reopen on 1 December. In March 2015 Lottery funding of £18.85m was secured to restore the theatre for use as a 1,300-seat performing arts centre, which will include films, and create a Museum of Television in the former BBC studios space. Another £6.8m was contributed from Haringey Council, who own the building. {44961}

*Sent in by Ken Roe*

### LONDON (Bayswater)

The nine-screen Odeon at Whiteleys is due to close on 25 November. It opened as the eight-screen UCI in December 1989 and was rebranded Odeon in late 2006. As recently as January 2012, five 'boutique' cinemas were created from four of the original screens. {21181}

*Sent in by Ken Roe*

### LONDON (Bromley)

No opening date has been set for the new nine-screen Vue cinema at St Mark's Square – it had been expected to open this autumn. A road was closed over a weekend to enable a crane to service the development.

*News Shopper – 28 September; sent in by Philip Stevens*

### LONDON (Camden)

The KoKo nightclub in the grade II listed former Camden Palace has been forced to close as "structural problems" have been found. The building, which opened in December 1900, is undergoing major construction work as part of a development of the building. A 32 room hotel is being built next door with access from some of the rooms to private boxes on the 2<sup>nd</sup> circle of the theatre. The flytower will be turned into a two-storey suite for the hotel next door, including a recording studio. {14486}

*Evening Standard – 27 September; sent in by Ken Roe, R David Simpson & Tom Laughlan*

### LONDON (Catford)

Plans have been approved for the former Poundland to become a three-screen cinema. Work was due to start in October and be completed by next May. No operator has been named.

*News Shopper, Bromley – 6, 12 September; sent in by Philip Stevens*

### LONDON (Crystal Palace)

While we await the opening of the West Norwood Picturehouse Cinema and Library, we should give a thought to our neighbours in Crystal Palace, who are also hoping for a new cinema before the end of the year. As in West Norwood, this will be their first cinema in 50 years. The property at 25 Church Road, Upper Norwood, dates back to 1928/1929, when it opened as the Rialto cinema, with a capacity of 1,450 seats. This was the early days of the talkies with *The Jazz Singer* starring Al Johnson recently released. In 1949/1950 the building was reconstructed by George Coles and it changed its name to the Granada Crystal Palace. It continued to show films till 25 May 1968, when it closed with *Reflections in a Golden Eye* with Marlon Brando and *Assignment to Kill*. For the next 30 years the building was used as a bingo club before being taken over by the Kingsway International Christian Centre, who eventually sold it to Everyman earlier this year. The Everyman Crystal Palace will have four-screens; it is set to open on 14 November. {28989}

*Norwood Forum Newsletter – 6 September; sent in by Robert Holden*

### LONDON (East Finchley)

Film enthusiasts have expressed concern about the takeover of the independent Phoenix cinema by Curzon. It would be renamed the Curzon Phoenix and Curzon would be responsible for marketing and programming. No contract has yet been signed. A public meeting at the Phoenix was scheduled for Sunday 28 October to debate the matter.

*Evening Standard – 24 September; Ham & High – 27 September; sent in by Mike Collins, Terry Hanstock, R David Simpson & Tom Laughlan*

### LONDON (Eltham)

The new six-screen cinema being built in Eltham High Street is expected to be completed in November, followed by a thirteen-week period for fitting out and a further week for staff training. A 'soft' opening is hoped for around mid-April next year. The cinema is being built by Willmott Dixon for the Royal Borough of Greenwich at a cost of around £20 million, including some £6.5m on unforeseen extra cost for ground-works. It will be run by Vue and include restaurants for Pizza Express and Nandos with an extra operator to be agreed for the 'sky bar'. The site is quite near to where the ABC Cinema was (1922-1972) on the corner of Passey Place, now replaced with shops.

*Sent in by John & Marion Kennett*

### LONDON (Harrow)



Uncertainty surrounds the future of the Safari cinema amid rumours that it is to be put up for sale. The building opened in January 1936 as the Dominion and later became the ABC. In the early 1960s, the façade was covered in metal cladding, which remains today. In 1972 it was split with bingo in the stalls and a 612-seat cinema in the circle, which since 1995 shows Bollywood films. The stalls area is now occupied by a church. {21135}

*Harrow Times – 11 October; sent in by Mike Collins*

### LONDON (Kensington)

The Council wants "crisis talks" with the new owners of the empty Odeon to bring it back into use or it could compulsorily purchase it. Planning permission exists to turn the site into flats, retaining the façade but construction has not started; a basement cinema was also in the plans. However, a substantial amount of demolition has already taken place so reopening seems unlikely. {13801}

*Evening Standard – 7 September; The Times – 10 September; sent in by R David Simpson*

### LONDON (Kilburn)

"A banquet of bollocks" was *Private Eye*'s cutting description of the reasoning behind the decision to relaunch the Tricycle Theatre as The Kiln. A petition to revert to the old name has over 1,500 signatures. Former Tricycle directors and board members wrote an open letter claiming the change "throws away a valuable legacy". The new name comes after a £7m redevelopment. {21110}

*The Stage, The Guardian – 3 September; Time Out – 11 September; Evening Standard – 12 Sept; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### LONDON (Lewisham)

A £4m Lottery-funded restoration of the Fellowship Inn in Bellingham is due to be completed soon. The building will house an 80-seat cinema, a pub, a theatre and a microbrewery. In the 1920s it was one of the first pubs to be built on a social housing estate. In 1963 boxer Henry Cooper lived and trained there leading up to his fight with Muhammad Ali.

*Greenwich Weekender – 8 August; sent in by John & Marion Kennett*

### LONDON (Notting Hill)

I recently attended a production at the former Coronet cinema (now The Print Room) in London's Notting Hill, as much to see inside as anything else. It is quite an experience to sit in the now 200-seat auditorium with its rather abandoned appearance (bare walls, cramped seating etc) but I assume it has had a full safety inspection! According to the printed programme the building, which opened in 1898 as a Victorian playhouse, was in continuous operation as a cinema from 1923 right up to 2014. Although the projection boxes are still visible at the back of the disused balcony there is no possibility of films being shown any longer, as several rows of stalls seats have been removed to accommodate the acting area and the screen was probably where the dressing rooms are now located. There is a 90-seat studio space beneath. I find it difficult to work out whether the main house has been subdivided, though I think not. The box office area is little changed and the candlelit corridors leading to the auditorium are richly decorated with posters. The real jewel is the downstairs bar, which is semi-circular in shape; this is rightly described as London's most beautiful theatre bar. It does not open however until 6:30pm (though I have suggested they experiment with lunchtimes)



and then for ticket holders only. The only way therefore, to access this wonderful building is by buying a ticket for one of the plays. I cannot recommend a visit highly enough. A full architectural description can be found in the Theatres Trust's *Guide to British Theatres 1750-1950* (ISBN 0-7136-5688-3), published in 2000.

*Sent in by Anthony Wills*

### LONDON (West End)

The Shaftesbury Theatre has been granted planning permission for a new foyer, step-free access and an outside space in a newly-created pedestrian area. The theatre has long been isolated by roads on every side. The venue has recently had a £5m extension, including an extended fly tower.

*The Stage* – 27 September; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

The Queen's Theatre, home to *Les Misérables*, is aiming to more than double its toilet capacity after it emerged that audience members were missing up to ten minutes of Act II because of queue times at the interval. Planning permission has been granted to install up to 33 additional toilets in the venue; it currently has 24. They will be created by developing an unused light well so the toilets can be added at every level. A spokesman said a minimum of 12 would be introduced, mainly for female patrons.

*The Stage* – 4 October; sent in by R David Simpson

The Empire (ex Carlton) in Haymarket has been listed grade II. Earlier this year, The Crown Estate, owner of the building, submitted an application for a certificate of immunity from listing (COI) which would have permitted the demolition of the cinema. Following campaigning by the CTA and SAVE Britain's Heritage, with support from the Twentieth Century Society, Ancient Monuments Society, World Monuments Fund Britain and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the DCMS has now conferred grade II listing status on the building. Well done to all involved! Photo on front cover. Exterior photo on p32 Bulletin 52/3. Major article in *Picture House* No.38 (2013) pages 3-9.

*Sent in by CTA Casework Committee*

**Your editor adds:** Well done to all involved!

### LOUGHBOROUGH (Leics)

A new film called *Do Something Jake* had its première at the Odeon on 20 September. It was partially shot in the area and contains scenes at 'One Stop Shoe Repairs' on Coalville High Street and features the owner. See [imdb.com/title/tt4856996]

*Ashby Times* – 10 August

### LUTON (Beds)

There is a planning application for change of use for the former Picturedrome 87 Park Street on the Council website. The planning application is No 18/01161/COU. It seems likely they will get the planning permission as it's not a big change that they are planning for the building. {45809}

*Sent in by Margaret Burgoine*



Work is continuing on the conversion of the former Ritz in Gordon Street into flats. Perhaps 'conversion' isn't the right word – 'demolition' is perhaps more appropriate for parts of the building. At least it isn't all being flattened.

*Sent in by Margaret Burgoine (photo)*

### MACCLESFIELD (Cheshire)



The Council is poised to grant permission for the former Picturedrome to become an indoor communal food hall. It opened in October 1911 and closed in the 1970s in favour of bingo. This closed in 1999 and the building was subsequently used as offices. {24462}

*Macclesfield Express* – 14 August; *The Guardian* – 17 September; sent in by Richard Lysons; photo taken June 2006

### MANCHESTER (Central)

The Vue Printworks is having IMAX laser projectors installed and is due to come into use on 16 November. This will probably mean the loss of the IMAX 15/70 facility. {25060}

*Sent in by Carl Chesworth*

### MANCHESTER (Didsbury)

The eleven-screen Cineworld is having a refurbishment. IMAX and ScreenX (3-sided) are being installed. The venue already has a 4DX (motion) screen and a Superscreen. {25058}

*Sent in by Carl Chesworth*

### MANCHESTER (Higher Blackley)

An outdoor screening of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* had to be abandoned after bad weather caused a bar tent to fly over an 8ft fence. Did you know: the park is the largest municipal park in Europe?

*Manchester Evening News* – 27 August; sent in by Richard Lysons

### MANCHESTER (Hulme)



Part of the former Hippodrome has reopened as a community centre. It opened in October 1902, built adjacent to the 1901 Grand Junction Theatre. It was converted for cinema use in April 1929 but reverted to live theatre in 1950. Between 1956 and 1986 it was a BBC studio. In 1990 it was taken over by the Nia Group to be used as an Afro-Caribbean cultural centre for drama, music & dance. It was re-named Nia Centre and opened on 22 April 1991. Since they moved out, the building has been used as a church and a pub. From 24 November to 2 December the Manchester International Short Film Festival (Kino-film Festival) will be held in the theatre. {55595}

*Sent in by Ken Roe & John Wojowski; photo taken May 2007*



### MARGATE (Kent)

The future of the grade II\* listed Theatre Royal is in doubt after a planned takeover by London's Soho Theatre collapsed. The building is Britain's second oldest theatre and is currently owned by Thanet District Council. The venue is on the Theatres Trust 'at risk' register.

*The Stage – 11 October; sent in by R David Simpson*

### MATLOCK (Derbys)

The former Palace, which has been unused for a year or two, was showing signs of being internally redesigned, when I passed on a bus on 15 August. {49940}

*Sent in by Peter Good*

### MIDSOMER NORTON (Somerset)

The former Palladium started a new life as a Wetherspoons pub named the Palladium Electric on 18 September. The cinema opened in 1913 and closed in 1993. It had been unused when Wetherspoons took it over in 2015. There are pictures and a video on the SomersetLive website at [tinyurl.com/ybg3dqpt]. {28883}

*Sent in by Ken Roe*

### MINEHEAD (Somerset)



S&B cinemas, which runs the Ritz at Burnham-on-Sea and the Westway at Frome, was hoping to buy the Queen's Hall and turn it into a three or four-screen cinema. However, they pulled out as they were unable to reach a deal with the Regal, which has a 1965 covenant preventing films being shown in the Queen's Hall.

It was advertised on a commercial property website for £395,000 [tinyurl.com/y7jgdpgr]. It is estimated the conversion would have cost around £700,000. The building opened in June 1914 and was used as a cinema during summer months in the 1930s. During WWII it was used by troops as a canteen and later became an amusement arcade. By 2009 it was a bar and restaurant. {41612}

*West Somerset Free Press – 10 August, 12 October;  
sent in by Mike Collins; photo of Queen's Hall taken August 2003*

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.

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### NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME (Staffs)

Demolition of the former Savoy has begun. It opened in February 1913 and closed in April 1964 in favour of bingo. In December 1975 the former circle was reopened as a cinema, which lasted until February 1991. The stalls was converted into a health club and snooker club. An Urban Explorers' report with pictures is at: [tinyurl.com/ydy2j6jv] {38923}

*Sent in by Ken Roe*

### NORTHALLERTON (North Yorks)

Detailed plans have been drawn up for the development of the former prison site. It will include a four-screen cinema. If the planning application is successful, work is expected to begin in early 2019.

*Yorkshire Post – 6 September*

### NORWICH

The Vue cinema has applied for a licence to allow customers to drink alcohol inside its eight auditoria. {25218}

*Evening News, Norwich – 16 August*

### NOTTINGHAM



The Council has approved the adoption of a heritage local list, which will ensure that a number of the City's most treasured heritage assets currently not given national protection through Historic England listing, are protected and remain a key part of the City's heritage for the benefit of future generations. Amongst them is the former Futurist cinema in Basford. {37401}

*Nottingham Council Press Release – 20 September;  
sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken July 2004*

### PETERBOROUGH (Cambs)

The Broadway has been renamed the Peterborough Theatre to "draw a line on its history". It has had years of financial difficulties. Part of the blame is being placed on the "greed of performers". See p24 last Bulletin. {19950}

*Peterborough Telegraph – date unknown; sent in by Martin Lightfoot*

### PLYMOUTH



The Theatre Royal has been listed grade II. Opened officially in 1982, it is described as an "important example of post-war repertory theatre.

*The Stage – 13 September; sent in by Barry Quinton; photo taken June 2008*

Plymouth College of Art has filed a bid to turn a ground-floor lecture hall into a new 118-seat public cinema. It will be operated by Plymouth Arts Centre, which will move from its existing film venue in Looe Street.

*The Herald, Plymouth – 22 August*



## POOLE (Dorset)

Work is to begin shortly on the new nine-screen Empire at the Dolphin Centre.

*Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 5 September; sent in by John R Forster*

## PORTSMOUTH



**RW Hawkins writes:** The former Troxy in Fratton Road is up for sale (freehold). Plans are for demolition and to build flats. It opened in July 1936 and closed in June 1963 in favour of bingo. This closed in 1993 and the building was last used as a shoe shop, which closed in March 2017. I remember seeing Adam Faith leaving the rear entrance and many pop shows and wrestling were held there in the 1960s. {44328}

*Photo taken May 2006*

## PRESTON (Lancs)

The Flower Bowl complex has opened at Barton Grange Garden centre on the A6 between Preston and Garstang. It offers ten-pin bowling, curling, crazy golf, restaurants and a three-screen cinema with sofa-style seating. Seating capacities are 32, 48 & 48. See: [theflowerbowl.uk] & [www.bartongrange.co.uk/flowerbowl].

*Sent in by Hugh & Susan Patching*

## RINGWOOD (Hants)

Campaigners fighting to restore the Regal have been dealt a blow after developers confirmed they are in negotiations with two possible buyers. One is a “millionaire” who may look kindly on the Trust’s £2m plans to make a 600-seat multi-purpose facility. {28134}

*Lymington Times – date unknown; sent in by Philip Stevens*

## ROMSEY (Hants)



The Plaza has been given £5,000 for a replacement lift after the old one broke down. The grant is part of the UK Small Grants Scheme. The venue first opened in December 1931 and was purchased by the Romsey Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society in 1982. The CTA visited in June 2015, when the above picture was taken.

*Daily Echo – 11 September; sent in by Ian Patterson*

## ROTHERHAM (South Yorks)

A developer has been appointed for the site at Forge Island, which will include a new cinema. Work is expected to start in October 2019 and take about two years. No operator has been named.

*Rotherham Advertiser – 24 August; The Star, Sheffield – 29 August*

## SALFORD (Greater Manchester)



The grade II listed former Victoria Theatre went up for auction on 6 September and was sold post-auction; the guide price had been £350,000. The identity of the buyer and their plans for the building have not been revealed. It opened in December 1900, designed by Bertie Crewe and had 3,000 seats. It had periods of cinema use until 1958. In 1980 it became a bingo hall, which closed in 2012. The Salford Victoria Theatre Trust had been trying to get it registered as an Asset of Community Value and have launched a petition urging Salford Council to work with them to help save the theatre. {2056}

*Manchester Evening News – 23 August; Salford Star – 26 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth & John S Wilkinson; photo taken November 2005*

**Editor's Note:** The CTA visited the theatre in October 2002 when Gary Trinder drew the three winners of a competition to win a book by John S Wilkinson – see p6 & p18 Bulletin 36/6.

## SCARBOROUGH (North Yorks)

The new multiplex at the Atlantis waterpark will not now open until 2020. The number of screens has been reduced from seven to five or six.

*Yorkshire Post – 4 September*

## SOUTHAMPTON

The Harbour Lights cinema has a Fumeo (Milan, Italy) projector on display in the foyer. It was used from 1995 to 2015 and is now redundant. {6173}

*Sent in by RW Hawkins*

The Mayflower Theatre (ex Gaumont) reopened on 26 September after a £7.5m refurbishment. It has been repainted with a new red and gold colour scheme. All seats in stalls and circle have been replaced with 1,659 new wider seats with improved sightlines. The orchestra pit has been moved beneath the stage and accessibility has been improved, with better facilities for people with disabilities. New figures show the theatre brings in £75m a year to the City’s economy. There is a gallery of 50 photos on the *Daily Echo* website at: [tinyurl.com/y88fcc4x]. {6296}

*Southern Daily Echo – 6, 27 September; sent in by Ian Patterson*

The ten-screen Showcase Cinema de Lux was evacuated on the afternoon of Saturday 4 August due to a fire in a freezer. It was extinguished before the fire brigade arrived. The cinema opened in February 2017. {55410}

*Southern Daily Echo – 6 August; sent in by Ian Patterson*

## STAFFORD

The opening of the new £6.5m Odeon has been delayed due to construction problems. The 400-seat six-screen cinema is now set to open in November.

*Express & Star – 13 September*

The Wetherspoons pub in the former Picture House has handed back its ‘knife wand’ as it fears the device could put off customers. The pub was one of 70 venues across Staffordshire to receive the device, which scans customers for weapons, from the police.

*Express & Star – 4 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth*



## STIRLING



The Allanpark/Carlton celebrated its 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on 5 October. Opened in 1938 with 1,700 seats it was subdivided in 1977 with two 300-seat cinemas in the former circle and bingo in the stalls. The cinemas closed in April 2008 but the bingo operation continues. {50364}

*Daily Record* – 28 September; photo taken February 2006

## STOCKPORT

The Redrock complex, which contains the new ten-screen Light cinema, has been named the UK's worst new building by *Business Design* magazine. {56789}

*Manchester Evening News* – 6 September; sent in by Carl Chesworth

## STRATFORD-UPON-AVON (Warks)

Plans to demolish the Picturehouse and replace it with a hotel have been presented to the public, who gave them a mixed reception. The cinema has not been paying its way and the Council has given permission for a new Everyman elsewhere in the town.

*Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* – 9, 16 August; sent in by Terry Hanstock

## SWADLINCOTE (Derbys)



The former Empire is to reopen as The Lounge Bar after being closed for several months for refurbishment. The cinema opened in December 1912 and closed in the early 1960s to become an amusement arcade. {39091}

*Derbyshire Live* – 1 October; photo taken February 2005

## SYDNEY (Australia)

After many decades of silence, we are pleased to report that our restoration of the four manual, 21-stop Wurlitzer organ (Opus 2005, 1928) of the State Theatre has been completed. There have been no tonal modifications to the original design.

Sent in by Ian Hanson

## TETBURY (Glos)

The former GWR Goods Shed at the former Tetbury Station has been fully restored as an Arts Centre and digital cinema. It has 186 tiered, retractable seats and a café in a Finnish rail coach.

Sent in by Hugh Sykes

## UPPINGHAM (Rutland)

An article by Sheila Sleath (*What's in a hut? A WWI prisoner of war hut surviving as an Indoor Bowls Club* in Uppingham Rutland Record: journal of the Rutland Local History & Record Society 37 (2017) p315-325) reveals that Uppingham's first cinema was housed in an ex-servicemen's social club established after the end of First World War. It utilised a wooden kitchen hut from a former prisoner of war camp purchased from the Ministry of Munitions and erected at Tod's Piece, Uppingham, in 1920. Originally known as Uppingham Social Hall, the building was the first permanent venue for film shows in the town. A cinematograph licence was granted on 7 June 1920 to local grocer Henry Samuel, representing the Social Hall Committee. Named the Electric Cinema, it was run by a Cinema Committee. From 1932 to 1936 the licence holder was Bert Joseph Wilson, described as a "cinema proprietor". It was now called the Cosy Cinema but nicknamed *The Cosy* by its patrons. It closed on 16 January 1937, prior to the opening of the newly built Rutland Cinema the following week. The last film to be screened was *Strike Me Pink* (1935) with Eddie Cantor. The building still stands – much refurbished – and now houses the Uppingham Indoor Bowls Club.

Sent in by Terry Hanstock

## WILMSLOW (Cheshire)

The Mundin family has applied for planning permission so they can restore and reopen the former Rex. The cinema opened in October 1936 and films ceased in June 1995. In 1985 the stalls had been sealed off and the cinema was operating in the former circle. The new plans reinstate this cinema with around 150 seats and a second 62-seat screen will be opened in the former ballroom. The plans can be viewed on the Cheshire East Council website by searching for planning reference 18/4422M. The Mundin family have successfully reopened the Ritz Belper (Derbys), the Regal Melton Mowbray (Leics) and the Savoy Heaton Moor (Stockport). {33859}

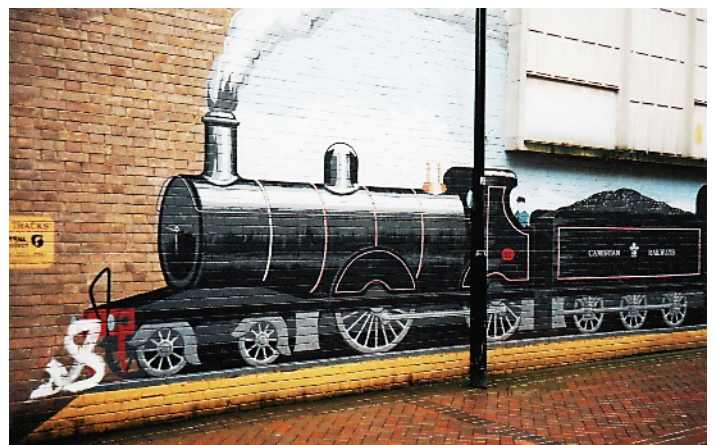


[*AlderleyEdge.com*] – 26 September;  
sent in by Carl Chesworth, Ken Roe, Terry Rourke & Nick Taylor

## WORTHING (West Sussex)

Criticism has been levelled at a £100,000 taxpayer-funded procurement exercise that aims to attract a private operator or trust to run Worthing Theatres and museum. Councillor Steve Waight asked why the Council had tabled a 25-year agreement whereby it would pay a new operator a £1.3 million per year subsidy while maintaining overall responsibility for the maintenance of the Connaught, Pavilion and Assembly Hall. Worthing Theatres currently receive £1.5 million per year from the Council, a figure which Councillor Dan Humphreys, leader of the Council, said was an investment in the town's cultural offer. He added that other theatres, such as the nearby Chichester Festival Theatre, received subsidies that massively outstripped those underpinning Worthing Theatres. Martin Randall, the Council's director for the economy, added that Worthing Theatres generated almost £10 million a year for the local economy through staff spending their wages in the town and customers visiting restaurants and pubs before and after shows.

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe



The locomotive mural Hugh Sykes mentions in his article on p18; sorry I couldn't fit it in on that page



# CINEMA BUSINESS

## EVERYMAN EXPANDS

The Everyman cinema chain is to spread into Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It started in 2000 with the purchase of the Everyman cinema in Hampstead, north London and has grown to 22 venues with 69 screens and has another 15 committed sites. It reported a 32% jump in first half revenues to £24.9m with underlying earnings up 35% to £4.1m on an adjusted basis. In early September, shares closed at 233p, up 5p or 2.3%.

*Daily Telegraph, City AM, The Times – 6 September; sent in by Carl Chesworth, Barry Quinton & Jon Williams*

## VUE EXPANDS

Vue has struck a deal to acquire the 57 cinemas of Germany's CineStar group for €130m upfront and up to €91.8m more depending on performance, in total €221.8m (£195m). This is Vue's third deal of the year following acquisitions in Ireland and Poland and takes the circuit to 282 cinemas and over 2,400 screens.

*Evening Standard – 22 October; sent in by Allen Eyles*

## TICKET PRICING



As reported on p28 of Bulletin 52/2, Vue has cut regular prices at some [initially 22 but later expanded, including Birkenhead (photo)] of its cinemas to £4.99. However, in a few places this has caused a discrepancy between prices at neighbouring venues. For instance, a standard ticket at Vue Carmarthen costs £10.99, while the same ticket at Vue Swansea, 25 miles away, costs £4.99 (both plus 75p booking fee). People have reported similar inconsistencies at Odeon cinemas; a family ticket in Dunfermline costs £9.25 per person compared to £5.75 in Edinburgh. The reports contained many other examples.

*Fife Free Press – 2 August; South Wales Evening Post – 14, 30 August; Carmarthenshire Herald – 10, 15 August; BBC Wales News Website – 18 August; also sent in by Allen Eyles (photo) & Martin Tapsell*

## UK CINEMA ADMISSIONS

UK cinema admissions are set to rise in 2018 with cinema-going up 3.3% from January to the end of August compared to the same period last year. Based on total admissions of 170.6 million in 2017, if the percentage increase recorded to August 2018 is sustained, the total figure for this year could top 176 million for the first time since 1970. The last decade has seen admissions fluctuate on a largely flat line between the 160 million and 170 million mark. Meerkat Movies, the cinema tickets promotion operated by price comparison website [comparethemarket.com], has proven a significant boost to admissions this year. However, while footfall is up, box office receipts have actually fallen this year. For the first six months of 2018, total takings were down 2%, to £665.8m, on the previous year.

*Screen Daily – 9 October*

## MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL

Derby Cathedral is embroiled in a row with worshippers over plans to show a series of films that will include graphic sex scenes, full female nudity and a pagan sacrifice. The latter features in the 1973 British horror film *The Wicker Man*. Other films in the season include *Don't Look Now*, *Sister Act* and *Monty Python's Life of Brian*.

*Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail – 21 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Tom Laughlan*

## ENTERTAINMENT TAX STRIKES

More than 450 cinema operators in Madhya Pradesh [India] have gone on indefinite strike against the double taxation on cinema tickets. Local entertainment tax is up to 15% in addition to Goods and Services Tax of 28% on cinema tickets. Madhya Pradesh accounts for about 4% of total box-office revenues in the country.

*The Economy Times – 6 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## NETFLIX WAR

The UniCi Consortium [a network of independent Italian cinemas, representing about 15% of the Italian box-office] has announced it won't screen Netflix films day and date in their cinemas until future regulations are in place to protect exhibitors in Italy.

*Hollywood Reporter – 10 May; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## MURDOCH SELLS SKY SHARES

Universal Studios' owner Comcast has cemented its control of Sky, doing an £11.6bn deal with Rupert Murdoch. This means it has secured more than 75% of Sky's shares, moving a step closer to completing its £30bn takeover of the company.

*Daily Mail – 5 October; sent in by Tom Laughlan*

## BECTU STRIKE

On Saturday 20 October, BECTU members fighting for the living wage at Picturehouse cinema, held a demonstration at the London Film Festival. They aimed to highlight their continued struggle for a wage they can live on and to protest against the British Film Institute's use of Picturehouse cinema to screen their films.

*Stage, Screen & Radio – autumn 2018; sent in by Jon Williams*

## BILLIONAIRE FLOP

Kevin Spacey's latest film *Billionaire Boys Club* took just \$126 [£99] on its first day of release. The film was given a dubbing from critics and opened in just ten cinemas in the US. This means that an average of fewer than two people per cinema bought tickets. This was the last film he made before being accused of sexual assault by more than 30 men.

*Daily Telegraph – 20 August; sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## AMAZON'S BIG SCREEN BID

Amazon is reportedly trying to acquire Landmark Theatres, which owns 56 cinemas in the US; it is up against other bidders. Owning cinemas could boost Amazon Studios, the company's production arm, which was behind Academy Award nominated *Manchester by the Sea*.

*Daily Mail – 19 September; sent in by Barry Quinton & Tom Laughlan*

## BINGO'S NEW TUNE

Mecca Bingo is trying to tempt back gamblers with music-themed events after numbers fell 7.9% last year. Parent Rank Group, which also own Grosvenor Casinos, posted a 41% drop in profits to £46.7m during the year to 30 June. Sales at its gambling venues slumped by 3.9%, causing its total revenues to drop by 2.3% to £738m.

*Daily Mail – 17 August; sent in by Barry Quinton*

## BABES IN ARMS NOT ADMITTED?

A mum has criticised Cineworld staff who refused to let her into a screening of Lady Gaga hit *A Star is Born* [15] with a four-week-old baby. She said she had been to the cinema before with her other child to special 'Babes in Arms' showings where infants can attend screenings in the morning and afternoons with parents. Cineworld said British Board of Film Classification rules meant anyone under-age, including babies, could not be let into age-rated films. "We are sorry this customer was disappointed but this is a mandatory law that staff have to follow," it said. "We allow babies into all films that are classified as [12A] and under."

*BBC News website – 11 October; sent in by Philip Stevens*

**Editor's Note:** See Newsreel p20.

## SEATS FREE TO GOOD HOME

Seats from the Theatre Royal Drury Lane are being offered "free to good home" when the venue undergoes a refurbishment next year. A spokeswoman said they were keen to receive offers from theatrical or education communities requiring batches of 100 seats or more. They will be available for collection from January 2019.

*The Stage – 20 September; sent in by Barry Quinton*



# MISCELLANY

## POSTER MAN

In cinema's heyday, a long-forgotten industry flourished in cinema's shadow – the business of poster writing. Every cinema exhibited outdoor posters, often one each side of the entrance. These were called 'oils' and could range from 5ft to 50ft long. Since most picture houses changed programmes midweek and had a different show on Sunday, poster-making flourished. Manchester's two largest poster-making companies were Gordon's Publicity and ADS (Art Display Services), each employing about 100 staff. Cyril Walker worked for Gordon's:

"Oils was my domain. We worked in groups, almost conveyor belt fashion. One guy pinned sheets of white paper on long wooden benches, followed by a foreman ruling lines by walking backwards with a pencil on the end of his 3ft ruler, the other end following the edge of the bench. Another guy put in Monday, Tuesday and Wednesdays, another the star's name, another the film's title and yet another 'Full supporting programme'. The pins were out, the sheets put under the table to dry (which didn't take long because the special ink was thinned with petrol, which evaporated quickly – most of it into our clothes!) Because so many posters were needed each week, speed was of the essence. The speed of the production line was down to precision-made one-stroke brushes and the aid of a finger stick to guide your brush in a straight line. I served in the navy as a telegraphist. When I returned to Gordon's, one of my regular jobs was the Odeon Derby. I had a mate in Derby and kept in touch by putting a border in Morse code around the Odeon poster."

*Sent in by Carl Chesworth*

## MAGNIFICENT FLYING SCREEN GETS AIRBORNE



Mobile Phone Company EE is staging screenings for rural communities in a 'flying' cinema that dangles 100ft in the air, winched up by a crane. It will tour areas recently added to the company's 4G network. The experience – including popcorn deliveries by drone – was tried out by 20 students from Goodwood Flying School in Chichester.

*Metro – 3 October; sent in by Margaret Burgoine, Carl Chesworth & Tom Laughlan*

**Editor's Note:** No, it's not 1 April!

## WORLD RECORD CINEMA VISITS

One movie buff has proved just how much he loves the big screen by watching more than 700 films in the cinema in 12 months. Parisian Vincent Krohn, embarked on his quest on 23 March 2017 and, despite his full-time job, has achieved the new record for the most films seen in a cinema in one year with 715, beating the old record of 500 by 215 films. To complete the challenge, the 29-year-old Frenchman watched an average of 14 films a week, cramming 10 into his weekends and four during the rest of the week. His favourite was *Back to the Future* which he described as his "most amazing experience", while at the other end of the scale declared 1980s art-house film *The Last of England* as his least enjoyable.

*Guinness World Records – 14 August*

## INFLATABLE MOVIE SCREEN

Large inflatable movie screens are a US concept that hasn't fully made it into the UK. Amazon has a wide range, some of which self-inflate, from £140 up to several thousands of pounds; search "inflatable movie screen".

*Evening Standard – 30 August; sent in by Tom Laughlan*

## STAMPS CELEBRATE OLD VIC'S BIRTHDAY



Maggie Smith, Richard Burton, Judi Dench and Glenda Jackson are among the famous faces that feature on a new set of stamps released by Royal Mail to mark the Old Vic's 200th birthday. A set of eight, each featuring a memorable Old Vic performance. They are available individually but a presentation pack of all eight (illustrated above) costs £10.35.

*The Stage – 23 August; sent in by Barry Quinton*

## THE THEATRE IN THE VAN

The smallest West End theatre entertained fans with three shows a day in late August. With room for an audience of six, it is housed in a Citroën Space Tourer van. It hosts a 20-minute show by two actors in the front. A parking bay in Drury Lane has been suspended so the van can sit undisturbed. Its seats have been reupholstered in traditional theatre red, with headrests removed to improve the audience's view.

*Evening Standard – 22 August; sent in by Barry Quinton*

## PLAQUE UNVEILED

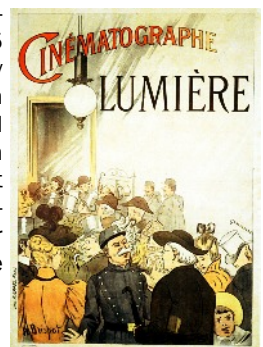
A plaque honouring Alan Jay Lerner has been unveiled at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane. His shows include *My Fair Lady*, which had its première at the theatre in 1958.

*The Stage – 6 September; sent in by Barry Quinton*

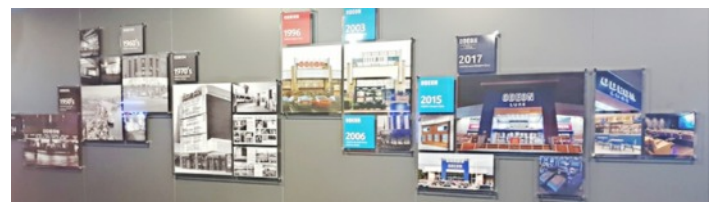
## WORD'S FIRST FILM POSTER

The world's first film poster has sold at auction for £160,000. It advertised an 1895 showing in Paris of 20 minutes of shorts by the Lumière Brothers. Sotheby's in London gave the poster an estimate of £40,000 and was stunned at the sum reached. The 58in by 30in design was by artist Henri Brispot but it attracted just 30 people to the screening. Sotheby's previous best for a film poster was £42,000 last year, an advert for the 1933 *King Kong*.

*Daily Mail, Daily Record – 17 August;  
Daily Mirror – 14 September;  
sent in by Barry Quinton & Tom Laughlan*



## ODEON CELEBRATES ITS HERITAGE



Odeon is celebrating its historic cinemas in Exeter, Weston-super-Mare and Salisbury by installing history walls in them. The company has also recognised the history of its presence in Glasgow by the installation of a history wall in the Odeon at Glasgow Quay. Some images for these installations have been provided by David Simpson and the CTA archive. These are permanent installations, so members are encouraged to pop in when visiting those towns. It is lovely to see the circuit celebrating its heritage in this way. Odeon kindly provided this photo of the installation at Glasgow Quay.

*Sent in by David Simpson*



# LETTERS

## DOWN MEMORY LANE

It is always nice to read and see Wilf Watters' strolls down Memory Lane in the Bulletin. Some members may not realise that a number of Wilf's own early films showing Memories of Hoxton, the Marlborough Theatre and Last London Trolleybuses etc are shown on the *Talking Pictures* channel (Freeview 81) so look out for them. Thanks, Wilf for letting us have the chance to see them.

Les Bull

## POINTS FROM PREVIOUS BULLETIN

Vera Lynn in Chester: Three of Vera Lynn's films are now available on DVD Including *Rhythm Serenade* and *We'll Meet Again*. All are worth obtaining and are good value for money. The Tivoli Wimborne was one of Myles Byrne's cinemas, which included at one time the Theatre Royal Winchester and the Continentale in Brighton. The Tivoli advertised itself as "Cinema at its Best". When it closed an additional notice said "Permanently Closed" On a visit to the building a few years ago, the tour guide said that during closure, the local gunsmith used the screen as a rifle target.

Ian Patterson

## SUNDAY OPENING



I was interested in the article about Sunday opening of cinemas in Skipton and to see that the staff of the Plaza (I am sure that's what it should have read) voted against it. They did succumb, however and certainly in the early 1970s the cinema opened on Sundays. Later it reverted to six-day opening but when I took over in 1998 I promptly restored Sunday opening. I was glad to see the picture from 2005, which made me realise that we have in fact achieved quite a bit since taking over, as shown in the above picture taken this September.

Charles Morris

*Sunday Opening in Skipton* (p12 last Bulletin) prompts me to write. When I worked in Derby (at the Odeon/Gaumont (later the Odeon) and the Superama, Derby Council's licensing conditions for cinemas opening on Sundays were fairly rigid: we were only licensed to operate from 2:30pm until 9:30pm. The conditions stipulated that the cinema could open its doors at 2pm but no music was to be played, (the audience were sitting in silence until the 2:30pm start-time when the day's programme started). If, because of a 'technical issue' the film programme were to continue beyond the 9:30pm cut-off time, then the remainder of the film showing was to have the sound turned off! Thankfully this never happened, for the programme was trimmed down for Sunday (usually omitting *Look at Life*) and the programme would finish around 9:10pm to be within the license. Even the luxury Compton Superama (later the Odeon Pennine) had to comply with this strange request for quite a number of years. Another less well-known facet of Sunday opening, was that for each ticket purchased, one [old] penny was to be given as a separate cash item to the Mayor of Derby's Special Purpose Fund: this 'fund' then paid for a Christmas Lunch at Derby Guildhall for a chosen number of Derby's pensioners as a treat for them. The lucky chosen recipients would also receive five shillings (2 x half-crowns): the coins being supplied by a chosen bank and 'new' of that year. My grandmother was 'chosen' one year (1967) and she gave my sister and me one coin each – I still have it!

Carl Chesworth

## LONSDALE CINEMAS, ANNAN



I saw that we were mentioned in the last CTA Bulletin. You used a photo from 2009 so just thought I would send you a couple of newer pics: exterior, screen ① and screen ②.

Alan J Towers

## BOWNESS-ON-WINDERMERE ORGANIST

In answer to the query on p27 of the last Bulletin, the organist shown on the restored DVD of *The Dam Busters* is Paul Gregson, who is one of the regular organists there and part of the team of volunteers who installed the organ.

Charles Morris

## LONDON PALLADIUM WALL OF FAME

I passed by the London Palladium recently and they were having a press call for their new Wall of Fame. In fact it's all on the door that's now fixed to the entrance to the 'walkdown' to the Stage Door. It has 32 square metal 'head and shoulders' portraits of notable artistes who did more than two seasons there. They include Ken Dodd, Arthur Askey, Tom Jones, Vera Lynn, Max Miller, Bruce Forsyth, Nat King Cole, Tommy Trinder, Sammy Davis Jnr, Shirley Bassey, Bing Crosby, The Two Ronnies, Judy Garland, Bob Hope, Des O'Connor, Tommy Steele, Jimmy Tarbuck and Cliff Richard. The last four were there in person. The story made the *Evening Standard* and the *Daily Express*.

R David Simpson

## THE INVISIBLE FORMAT

Today we are in the digital age that has taken over in so many ways. We have digital music, television, scanning, the Internet and many other things, including film projection. Today, if you visit the projection room of your local cinema all you will see in place of a film projector is what looks like a big box. The only noise you will hear is the noise of a fan. You won't find anyone in the projection room, everything would have been programmed, usually by management and will start and stop itself. In fact, when programmed, the equipment can be left to run for as long as desired, without human intervention. A cinema owner could be at the other side of the world and be able to start the show remotely.

Amazing technology but it takes away the human touch in many cases. As far as cinema goes we can no longer see images on a frame, the whole thing is just an invisible file, which could become corrupted. This applies to digital generally. We no longer have a physical version of things. They are just files that we can't touch, see or smell. In the cinema world films are shot digitally and on film. Some are filmed using both. The worry is that over time, files can be corrupted, or they need to be re transferred to preserve the multi-million pound production. We know film has a long shelf life if stored in ideal conditions but we don't know how long the invisible digital files will survive. That is why many movies are being archived on film.

David A Ellis



## BLACKPOOL ADDITION

This refers to your item *Archive Correction* on page 30 of the last issue of the Bulletin. Whilst I have no wish to turn this into a saga, I thought that the following addition may be of interest to readers. The old King Edward Cinema building façade has been beautifully restored and is well worth the walk down Central Drive by any enthusiasts who visit Blackpool.

Jon Harrison

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

So what happened to all those cinemas who went over to sexploitation or 'continental' programming to stay afloat in the 1960s? The latter term might also mean European art house but certainly in Soho could better be described as Furtive House. Half of the 53 I traced were in London, including *Tatlers* and *Jaceys*. In the right location, with continuous performances not exceeding two hours, such cinemas could outperform mainstream cinemas in profitability. It was also unlikely anyone would protest if a film began in mid-plot (if any), broke down, was out of focus or soundless, until the doorman/cashier/projectionist noticed. This fate often befell those in the unlicensed clubs, who were most likely to break planning laws with their neon signs, inadequate fire escapes or failure to make change of use applications.

According to a researcher for *Sight and Sound* in 1982, the films he saw were not particularly distasteful but never erotic, simply boring. Few survivors warrant seeking out architecturally but the *Empire* in Huddersfield (still XX-rated in part of the balcony) has more of a presence than most. Speaking of erotic cinemas, one *Classic* in Praed Street (or Depraved Street) was picketed by nurses from nearby St Mary's Hospital, Paddington after showing *Swedish Nurses on the Job*. I was sent to Praed St to buy stock for my first branch library in Croydon!

The decline began in the seventies and climaxed, if you will pardon the expression, in 1981/82. By then patrons could obtain the films for home viewing. 17 have made way for new roads, retail etc. One *Continental* in Preston became a Punjabi temple, whilst the only one to penetrate London's Chinatown – Cinema XXX Macclesfield Street, is now the Maotai Kitchen. A late survivor was for Cannon, like a relative you don't mention – the Cannon Moulin 44 Great Windmill Street. This had been showing sex films since 1961 and absorbed the adjacent Dilly Club, all closing in April 1990. Interestingly, for the last eight years the manager was Pat Fergie, a real Norfolk character, a woman, who adjusted from managing queues of men at 1:30am to excited families, when transferred to Watford.

Some of the toughest cinemas preferred female manageresses for keeping order: the Odeons, Acton, Coatbridge and Lewisham, ABC Brixton and Granadas Clapham Junction and Walthamstow plus the Palace Portsmouth. *Classic* was the major chain that employed most women, although others liked being able to pay a lower rate than men would get.

I can think of examples of apposite programming – the Ritz Oxford booking *Summer Holiday* in the big freeze but a *Classic* showing, in freezing Edinburgh *There's no Sex Like Snow Sex*.

Martin Tapsell



## EARL'S COURT

The Earl's Court Exhibition Centre was mentioned on p4 of the last Bulletin. A couple of years ago I asked if anyone had any information about its demolition. As I am not able to get to London, can any member tell me what the current situation is? Any pictures or information about the demolition will be reimbursed at cost.

RW Hawkins, Fox Cottage, 19b Brodrick Avenue, Gosport, PO12 2EN

**Editor's note:** It's all gone. See:

[[www.capitalandcounties.com/property/earls-court](http://www.capitalandcounties.com/property/earls-court)]

## RESEARCHING CINEMA HISTORY

I was chatting the other week with a friend about researching cinema history in the future. No more ads in the style of yesteryear and no paper posters to record and collect, as cinemas now use electronic screens as posters. This will make the posters of yesteryear even more valuable. As far as newspapers go, it seems cinema researchers of the future will find it harder to gather information about the cinemas of today.

David A Ellis

## WORCESTER

Can I add a bit to Hugh Sykes' notes on Worcester cinemas in the last Bulletin, as the Odeon in Worcester has an unusual early history. It was almost ready for opening in September 1939 but on the outbreak of war was requisitioned by the Government for storage purposes. One reason for this, as can be seen from the railway platform on the bridge above Foregate Street, is that the side wall of the cinema backs right up to the railway tracks, so it was straightforward to arrange movement of materials between trains and auditorium. The cinema finally opened in 1950, so becoming one of the first post-war openings. Also referring to Hugh's article, it is perhaps worth noting that Worcester has a Vue multiplex, almost in sight of the cathedral.

Jeremy Perkins

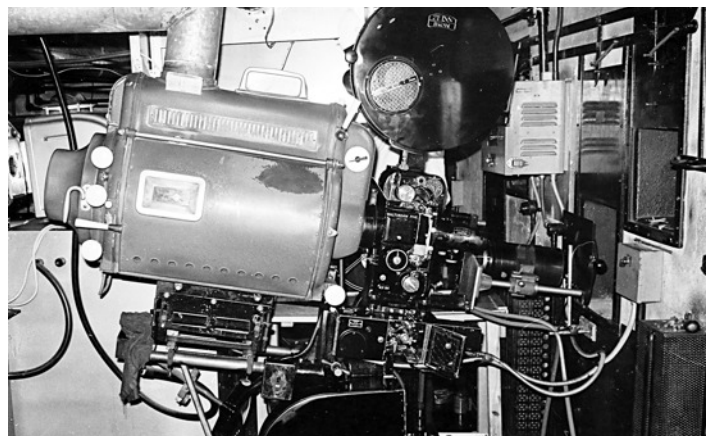
I thought the Worcester Odeon had seven screens and it was Vue who operated the multiplex?

Tim McCullen

## WALTURDAW

I am in the early stages of doing a YouTube video, which will feature Dave Nicholas, the organist who plays the Rushworth & Dreaper organ at the Liverpool Philharmonic Film nights, a post that he has held for 29 years! I am sure you are aware of the magnificent Walturdaw rising screen that is an integral part of the shows. I have always been led to believe that there are/were three such screens made by the former cinema equipment Company and that for certain there is one in Russia but which I understand is either (a) removed or (b) no longer working. Can any CTA Member supply me with information that I could include in the film, for which of course I am more than happy to offer a credit of choice.

Alan Ashton [[penalador@btinternet.com](mailto:penalador@btinternet.com)]



I'm replying to the letter from David Ellis in the last Bulletin, who requested information regarding cinemas that used the Walturdaw machines produced by Moy. Well a couple of cinemas here in Dorset had them for many years, namely the Regent Lyme Regis and the Plaza Dorchester, which was still using them, attached to Western Electric Universal bases. (Photograph above of Plaza machine taken in the early 1980s.) Although the Regent examples were much stripped down to accommodate 6,000ft spools, they still retained the original sound heads. As far as I know these projectors were copies of German Ernemann machines. Production was made possible after WWII when all patents on German products were declared null and void.

John Thornley

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In reply to the query by David A Ellis regarding Walturdaw Cinema equipment, I am fairly certain that the **Plaza** at Dorchester was using their projectors during the 1960s and early 70s.

*John Yallop*

In reply to David Ellis's letter in the last Bulletin, I can enlighten him to a certain extent. Walturdaw (coined from the names of its principals Walker, Turner and Dawson), were part of the cinema industry from the earliest days, claiming to have been involved from 1896, within a month of Messrs Lumière and Paul having established themselves at London's **Empire** and **Alhambra** respectively. They reckoned to have been the first to introduce Edison's Kinetoscope into this country and to have pioneered the hiring rather than the purchase of films.

They soon participated in the manufacture or supply of projectors and, as David states, other equipment and furnishings; practically everything a cinema could need. Their 1930 catalogue was a hard-backed quarto-sized volume, which ran to 260 pages. At that time they were marketing the German manufactured Ernemann Nos. 1, 2 and 3 projector mechanisms, the Hahn No.2 machine and, rather surprisingly, the Powers No.6, which was quite ancient by that time. Perhaps they had old stocks.

The War put an end to the importing of the Ernemann machines but afterwards Walturdaw had free access to the Ernemann 5 design, which they modified slightly and, using the manufacturing facilities of the Ernest F Moy company, produced the Walturdaw 5 mechanism. This possessed the rare feature of a water-cooled gate as standard. The mechanism could be adapted to most types of soundhead existing at the time and in due course Walturdaw produced their own sound attachment. They also manufactured the Hanley arc lamp to complete the equipment.

Although respected as a robust and reliable design, the Walturdaw 5 never achieved a level of sales approaching that of other post-war equipments such as the Kalee 21, BT-H SUPA, Westar or Ross. Nevertheless as late as the 1970s I saw them in use at the Embassy Hove (with the Walturdaw soundhead) and the Lyric Carmarthen (on Western Electric Universal bases). To my certain knowledge they were also installed at the Kings Oldham (on BT-H sound equipment) and the Kinema in the Woods Woodhall Spa. It is also stated in 1980 that they were in operation at the Chiltern cinema, Beaconsfield. I don't know if any of these had been installed new.

When the Astra Colwyn Bay (former Odeon) reopened in 1967, it too had Walturdaw 5 machines with a rare adaptation to the GK 83 soundhead, which was normally associated with the Kalee 21. I understand the set had come out of a cinema in the Potteries and was replaced after a short time.

Walturdaw went on to sell the Ernemann 7 machine, which was a combined mechanism and soundhead but I have never seen one of those.

*Charles Morris*

PS: The Empire Haslingden (long since closed) also had Walturdaw 5 mechs, on PTP soundheads. There will of course have been loads more.

## CARTOON CORNER



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

## SMALL CINEMA CIRCUITS

By David A Ellis

In the 1930s and '40s cinema was booming; there was no television and the only place to see a film was the cinema. Many people became involved in the medium and there were many small cinema circuits, as well as the major ones such as Odeon, Gaumont British and ABC. Here are a few of some small cinema circuits, with some of the cinemas they ran.

John Frederick Wood ran several cinemas around the Liverpool area, which included the **Mayfair** Aigburth Road, the **Plaza** Birkenhead and the **Abbey** Wavertree. His company went under the name Bedford Cinemas (1928) Ltd. His grandson the late David Wood took over the running of the **Woolton** Liverpool from the Godfrey family, who ran Cheshire County Cinemas. The head office for the Godfrey circuit was the **Empress** cinema Runcorn. Offices were at the back of the **Empress**. As well as Cheshire, they ran cinemas in Widnes, which at that time was Lancashire, later becoming Cheshire. Their cinemas included the **Plaza** Widnes, the **Empire** Widnes and the **Regal** Northwich.



The CTA group outside the Plaza Widnes in December 1998

Another small circuit based in Liverpool was Regent Enterprises, run by Philip Hamner. Regent Enterprises covered several companies including Byrom Picture Houses. They ran several cinemas, including the **Grand** Frodsham and the **Tivoli** Buckley. After closure, both the **Grand** and **Tivoli** went over to bingo for a short period. The **Grand** was demolished but the **Tivoli** is still standing as a night spot.

In Burnley, Lancashire, most cinemas were run by New Empire (Burnley) Ltd. Cinemas included the **Empress**, **Imperial**, **Pentridge**, **Grand** and **Tivoli**. Cheshire Picture Halls Ltd ran several around the Birkenhead area, including the **Regal** Bebington. When I started in the cinema back in 1964, I worked for independent operator Hutchinson's from Burnley; it was at the **Palace** Warrington, which had once been a theatre. The small circuit ran the **Astra** cinemas, including the **Astra** Rhyl, which had been the Odeon.

In London there was London and District Cinemas, run by a RB Wainwright. They ran the **Capitol** Epsom, their headquarters, the **Plaza** Plumstead, the **Pavilion** Aylesbury and several others. Another was London and Provincial Cinemas Ltd. Their theatres included the **Ritz** Tonbridge and **Savoy** Folkestone.

Another Liverpool circuit was the Levy Circuit, based in Bold Street. Managing director was Alfred Levy. The companies went under Liverpool Cinema Feature Film Co Ltd and London Palace (1921) Ltd. Theatres included the **Futurist**, **Lido**, **Scala**, the **Claughton Picture House** and the **Futurist** Birmingham.

There are far too many circuits to mention here but most of them have now gone. Others included, the **HD Moorhouse** circuit, the **Monseigneur News Theatres**, **Matlock Cinemas Ltd**, **Ben Kay's Circuit**, **Hull Cinemas Ltd** and the **AS Hyde Circuit**.



The Tivoli Buckley



The Pentridge Burnley



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

## 105 years



La Scala 8 James Street, Helensburgh. [Above]  
Opened December 1913. Architect Neil Campbell Duff. Listed C(s).



Electric Empire / La Scala 10 Station Road, Grangemouth. [Above]  
Opened 13 December 1913. Architect Alistair G MacDonald. Listed C(s).



Cinema House / Orient Express Viewfield Place, East Port, Dunfermline. Opened 19 December 1913. Listed B. [Above]

Palladium 81 Seaforth Road, Seaforth, Crosby, Liverpool.  
Opened 25 December 1913. Listed grade II. [No photo]

## 80 years



Grand 180 Lord Street, Southport. Opened 14 November 1938.  
Architect George E Tonge. Listed Grade II. [Above]

Regal/ABC 5 High Road, Streatham. Opened 14 November 1938. Architect William R Glen. Listed grade II – façade and foyer. [No photo]

Olympia/ABC 14 Orr Street, Bridgeton, Glasgow. Opened 21 November 1938. Architects George Arthur, Robert Elder, Charles J McNair (Frank Matcham & Co). Listed B. [No photo]



Northwick Ombersley Road, Worcester. Opened 28 November 1938.  
Architect C Edmund Wilford. Listed grade II. [Above]

Lyceum 908 Govan Road, Govan, Glasgow. Opened 19 December 1938. Architects Robert Elder, Charles J McNair. Listed B. [No photo]



State 205 Great Junction Street, Leith. Opened 19 December 1938.  
Architect James Miller. Listed B. [Above L]

Regal/ABC Ward's End, Halifax. Opened 19 December 1938.  
Architect William R Glen. Listed grade II. [No photo]

Plaza 96 Church Street, Flint. Opened 26 December 1938.  
Architect Sydney Colwyn Foulkes. Listed grade II. [Above R]



## NECROLOGY

### DENIS NORDEN CBE 96

Together with Frank Muir (d1998), he created one of the most successful script writing partnerships. His out-take show *It'll be Alright on the Night* was an ITV staple for almost 30 years. In *Who's Who* he listed his club as Saturday Morning Odeon and "loitering" among his recreations.



### CHARLES AZNAVOUR 94

Dubbed 'France's Frank Sinatra' he was one of France's most celebrated entertainers. His 1974 hit *She* spent four weeks at the top of the charts. He sold over 180m records worldwide and starred in over 60 films, including François Truffaut's *Shoot the Piano Player*.



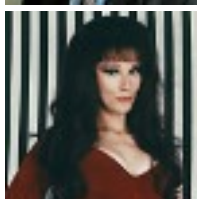
### NEIL SIMON 91

Born on the fourth of July, he became the only playwright to have four productions running on Broadway simultaneously and secure a Pulitzer Prize. He was nominated for 14 Tony awards between 1955 and 2001, winning three – for *The Odd Couple*, *Biloxi Blues* and *Lost in Yonkers*.



### FENELLA FIELDING OBE 90

With a voice of siren silkiness, she is probably best known for the 1966 film *Carry On Screaming*. She also appeared in *Carry On Regardless* and three of the *Doctor in...* films. She also had a career in the theatre, radio and TV, where she appeared in four *Morecambe and Wise* shows.



### RAY GALTON OBE 88

Together with Alan Simpson (d2017), they wrote *Hancock's Half Hour* and *Steptoe and Son*. He won two BAFTA awards among many others, such as a British Comedy Award.



### LIZ FRASER 88

Best remembered as the dizzy blonde who appeared in various guises in the early *Carry On* films. She also appeared in *The Bulldog Breed*, *The Family Way* and *Dad's Army*. TV shows included *Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased)* and *Benny Hill*.



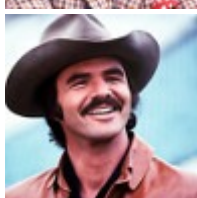
### DUDLEY SUTTON 85

Played mischievous antiques expert Tinker Dill in TV's *Lovejoy* from 1986 to 1994. He played a gay biker in the 1964 film *The Leather Boys* and played the title role in the first production of Joe Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane* in the same year. Notable TV credits include *Eastenders*.



### BURT REYNOLDS 82

His film breakthrough came in 1970 when he played opposite Jon Voight in *Deliverance*. He went on to star in *Smokey and the Bandit*, *The Cannonball Run* and *Boogie Nights*. The red leather jacket he wore in *Smokey and the Bandit* was auctioned in 2014 to pay off mortgage debts.



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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.

## ARCHIVE

### ARCHIVE ENQUIRIES

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

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

### ARCHIVE OPPORTUNITIES

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

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

### HELP THE ARCHIVE IDENTIFY CINEMAS

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

### SENDING DONATIONS BY POST OR EMAIL

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

Please let me know before sending donations by post and do not send them directly to the archive as there is no facility to accept post securely. Please send items c/o 14 Ivychurch Gardens, Cliftonville, Margate, CT9 3YG. Small quantities of scanned material or digital photographs can be emailed to [archive@cta-uk.org].

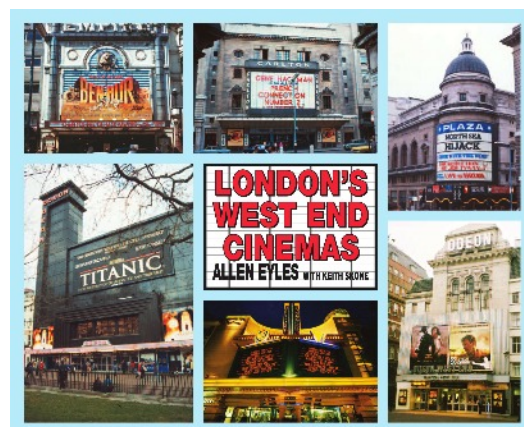
Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

## London's West End Cinemas

by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.

Large format paperback, 210 pages, fully illustrated with over 400 pictures, including 71 in colour.

Special price to members – £20.00 + £3 postage.



This is a redesigned and much enlarged third edition of a book not available for more than 20 years, fully updated by its original author, Allen Eyles. It is a complete record of all the cinemas that have entertained picture-goers in the West End from 1906 to 2013. There are maps, appendices of club cinemas and theatres as temporary cinemas as well as a name index.

Published in collaboration with English Heritage.



## OBITUARY

**JOHN PLATFORD; MARCH 1935 – OCTOBER 2018**



A debate on the film *The Great Escape* had touched on the allied airmen perhaps escaping to Russian lines, when John Platford, occasional organist at the Granada Kingston revealed that he could speak Russian. I had little suspected that during his National Service my theatre organist had worked for British Intelligence in Germany. John was full of surprises!

John's father had been an engineer with Granada Theatres and John went to work for 'Granny' as he always called it as an Organist in 1959. He was proud of the fact that he was paid a guinea for matinées, where as I, humble assistant manager, only got half a guinea for much more work.

I worked most closely with John when I was Manager of the Granada Theatre in Kingston; previously I had managed Harrow and became very close to the American Theatre Organ Society, giving talks to visiting 'organ nuts' and had noticed this odd individual who seemed to know everyone but was clearly not from the common herd. It became apparent over many months that he, like me, had a professional and company background and was as happy lurking backstage or in my office as he was listening to others play. He could never quite understand how I, who was involved in *Young Organist of the Year* and turned out at 8am to encourage teenagers to play, could not stand that "awful dirge" but forgave me readily, especially if coffee and sticky buns with extra cream were available!

Often my wife Lyn would cater for press receptions and Mary would prepare publicity whilst John would liaise with the performers and organ tuners, including the late Ted Bigny, sometimes performing himself for late night horror shows, wearing a skull mask and playing the Death March – those were the days! Even our wider family could not escape the madness, John's daughter, Rosamund manned the theatre kiosk and my daughter Lisa famously dressed as Miss Piggy complete with all the haughtiness that only she could muster.

John retired to Andover and he and I would share his copy of the CTA Bulletin, something that he looked forward to until he went into a care home in 2016, his son and daughter would take him organ tapes and we would look through all those old pictures in the Bulletin, reminiscing of visits to many of the buildings illustrated. RIP John, one of the old school.

*Jeff Curtis, former Manager, Granada, ABC and Contemporary Cinemas*



## MEMBERSHIP

### NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome from us all in the CTA to the following new members, who are listed in the order in which they joined: Michael G Hammond, Karl Parsons, David B Milner, Carol Milner\*, Paul Singleton, Neil Turner, Joanna Dugher, Susan Patching\* and Alan Cunningham. (\* indicates an Associate member.)

### DONATIONS

Our grateful and sincere thanks are extended to these members who kindly added a donation to their subscription renewals: AS Behrman, MA Bentley, CJ Bird, LS Bull, M Collins, MS Crowle, SJ Cusack, RD Dakin, JS Downs, E Christeler, GB Fenwick, MA Gambles, HW Gibbs, K Gooding, P Hake, RE Heaven, JL Howarth, DM Howarth, MF Jones, CP Kisicki, PJ Littler, A Lundgren, EL Marriage, MS Marsh, T McNamara, JH Muir, AJ North, HW Patching, A Philip, NA Pithouse, MS Plews, WR Pratt, G Reywer, JE Roberts, AS Rossiter, W Simmons, VRE Simon, DE Smith, TJ Smith, FD Snart, JE Thornley, JP Vaux and JB West.

### IN MEMORIAM

We were sorry to learn of the death, on 2 October 2018, of John Platford of Andover, a CTA member since 1994 and Life Member since January 2005. Our sincere condolences are sent to his family and friends. An obituary appears opposite.

*Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary*



The Directors and Committee are urgently seeking a replacement for our present Treasurer and Membership Secretary who, following 20 years service, wishes to stand down from these positions. Please send your details to the Company Secretary, Adam Unger, if you would like to apply and want further details. Adam's contact information can be found on page 2 of this Bulletin.

## CTA WEBSITE

Just a reminder that the CTA website [www.cta-uk.org] contains a list of UK cinemas and separate pages of multiplexes and listed cinemas. There are items on Casework and Cinemas at Risk and a page of useful links to other websites. There is an on-line CTA shop and an application form to receive the CTA e-newsletter. Brief details of the *Bulletin* and *Picture House* are included to entice non-members. Members themselves can access much more, including a pdf of the full Bulletin, by logging into the members' area. If you haven't registered for this, contact Neville Taylor (details on p2) for a password. If you have forgotten your password, click on the **MEMBERS' AREA >** link on the home page then click on the 'Forgotten Password' link; the system will send you an email with a link to a page to set a new password.

## SMALL ADS

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

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

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

**Display rates:** eighth page – £15; quarter page – £25; half page (horizontal or vertical) – £45; full page – £80

### 2019 Cinema Calendar

with 12 colour photos of UK cinemas taken this Century: Andover Odeon; Bath ABC Beau Nash; Bolton Lido; Cambridge Regal; Hull Mayfair; Ipswich Odeon; Nottingham Savoy; Reading Gaumont; Ripon Palladium; Scarborough Aberdeen Walk PH; Selsey Pavilion; Walthamstow Granada. Still only £6, including postage. Please make cheque payable to Harry Rigby or simply send £5 note plus two loose first-class stamps to:

Harry Rigby, 65 Tennyson Avenue, Harrogate, HG1 3LE or email [harry.rigby@ntlworld.com] for details of how to pay by EFT and save yourself a stamp!





# THE METROPOLE VICTORIA

By David A Ellis

The Metropole cinema in Victoria, London, which was originally going to be called the Broadway, was opened on Friday 27 December 1929. It was designed by George Coles and was built for brothers Sydney and Philip Hyams. It is said that it was part of the Hyams and Gale circuit but Gale has no mention in the list of directors. *The ERA*<sup>1</sup> dated 1 January 1930 says: The directors of the Metropole are Mr Philip Hyams (Chairman and joint Managing Director) Mr Sid Hyams (Joint Managing Director) Mr L Benvenuti, Mr HWS Howard and Mr BO Savage, ACA. Mr RS Sowden, whose long experience at the Rivoli and more recently at the Regal Marble Arch, equips him well for the post as General Manager and Mr Mick Hyams, House Manager. Mr Archie Parkhouse is to preside over the magnificent organ. Before teaming up with Gale the Hyams were responsible for several cinemas, which they sold to Gaumont.

Situated opposite Victoria Station, the Metropole was built on what was the bed of a river and the foundations had to be sunk to a depth of thirty five feet. The theatre was designed with a view to combining modern simplicity with the warmth and colour of the Spanish Renaissance period. The prevailing colour scheme throughout was amber, gold and blue. There was a marble floor in the foyer area with pillars of onyx and marble. The auditorium had walnut panelling and there was amber lighting that was concealed. There was a magnificent chandelier, which hung from the central dome. Auditorium carpet was in blue and the proscenium curtain was woven in gold. The proscenium itself measured thirty-seven feet. The theatre boasted six dressing rooms. Features in the foyer, included curved skylight Windows, which had a rich yellow stain with geometric decorations in orange and blue. They were in the high curved ceiling and were nine feet by eight feet.

The first film to hit the screen was *The Co-optimists*. It was stated in the press that the film was the most wonderful for voice reproduction we have heard. In fact by merely closing the eyes you could think the cast were there in the flesh.

At the opening a Mr Archie Parkhouse presented a musical novelty, on what was described as the magnificent Standaard organ, after which one of the directors of the theatre apologised for the unfinished state of the building. He told the audience that the elements had been against them and how sorry he was that those present walked in as the carpet people walked out.

In July 1935 the organ was replaced by a Wurlitzer model. In 1961 it was removed. Musical entertainment was provided by Jack Hylton and his boys. They created a furore when the curtain rose and they started to play *Singing in the Rain*, followed by *Ain't Misbehaving*, *Stepping Out* and others.

<sup>1</sup> *The ERA* was a theatrical newspaper, published 1837-1939

*The ERA* said: Although it has been stated that a full orchestra had been engaged for the new Metropole Cinema opposite Victoria Underground Station, there was not done at the opening on Friday and I understand that the directors are pursuing a "waiting" policy. That is to say, if the patrons of this magnificent new house desire a real orchestra, the directors are prepared to engage one. In the meantime, music lovers are to have bands and turns on the stage to satisfy their desires as far as possible. Jack Hylton and his boys were the opening attraction and are remaining on. Teddy Brown will be seen there in the near future.

On 1 June 1932, shortly after Baird's television demonstration at Selfridges, plans were made to televise the Epsom Derby. It was transmitted by land line to the Metropole. The Odeon circuit took control in 1943 and played first run Odeon circuit product. The cinema's claim to fame was in 1945 when the interior of the theatre and the organ, were featured in the classic movie *Brief Encounter*.

Road show presentations began in 1959 with the musical *Oklahoma*, opening on 26 December. Because it was now equipped for 70mm screenings, a new wide screen was placed in front of the proscenium and the seating capacity was reduced from the original 1,967 to 1,394. The new projectors were Philips DP70s. The DP70 was the only projector to win an Oscar. If anyone knows what projection equipment was in before 70mm, please let us know.

The cinema's longest run was *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) screened in 70mm with fantastic six track magnetic sound. It had previously had an eight week run at the Odeon Leicester Square. This ran at the Metropole for a staggering ninety-eight weeks. Another long run was the epic *El Cid*. On 5 April 1967 the cinema hosted a Royal Premiere, screening Steve McQueen in *The Sand Pebbles*. Eventually 70mm roadshow product started to dry up, no doubt due to expense and the cinema went back to first-run 35mm shows.

Sadly, film ceased on 11 June 1977 with the film *Burnt Offerings*. It became the Metropole Laser Theatre, staging a show called *Lovelight*, commencing 21 June 1977 until 26 September 1977. After this, the shutters came down and it didn't open for business until Virgin Records took control opening it as a concert hall named The Venue. This operated from 1 November 1978 until August 1984. The demolition hammer moved in after this, destroying the beautiful auditorium. The nearby Cameo/Classic was also victim to the wrecking ball. Fortunately, the foyer of the Metropole was retained and opened as a restaurant. After several occupiers it was opened as Pizza establishment called Ask.

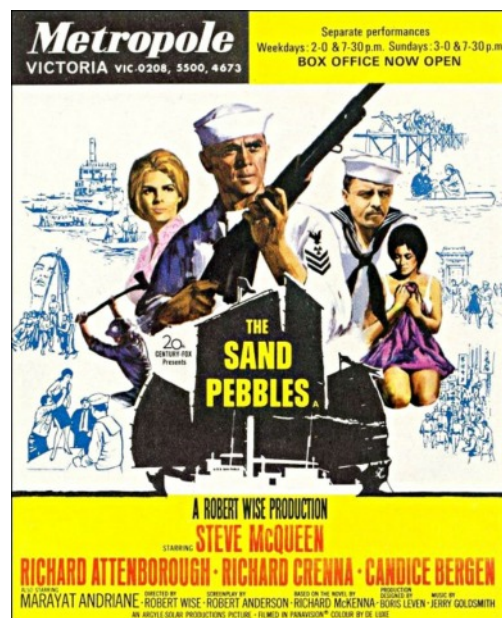
In September 2010 it was announced that the block, which included both the Classic and Metropole were to be demolished to make way for an extension to the Victoria Underground station, providing a new entrance and exit on the north side of Victoria Street. Another fine cinema had joined so many others, as just a memory. Thanks to *Cinema Treasures* for some of the information and images.



The Metropole in 1972



The Upper Foyer in 2010



Poster for *The Sand Pebbles*