



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

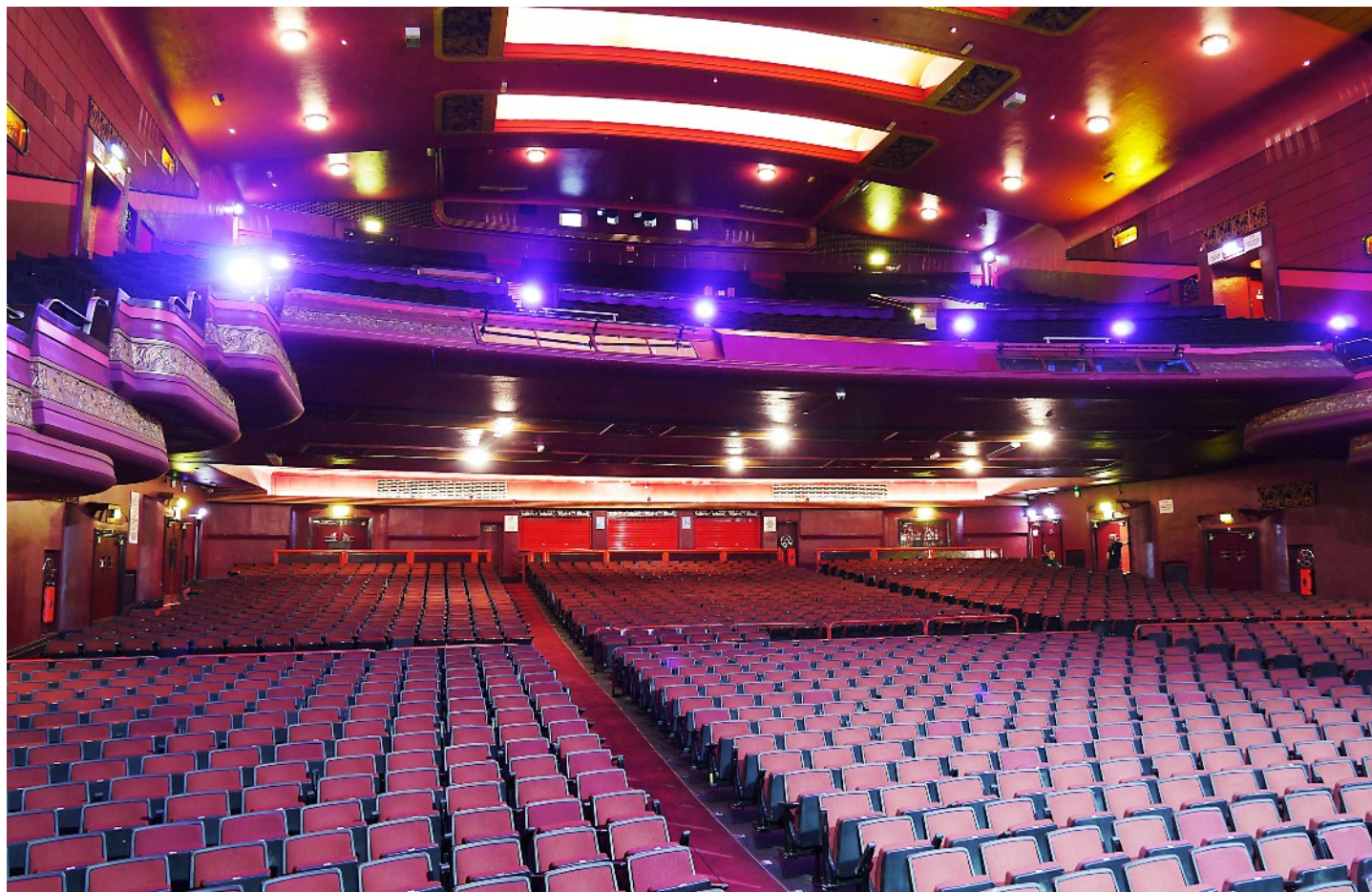
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BULLETIN

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January / February 2019



The auditorium of the Apollo Ardwick, Manchester, visited by the CTA last August – see report p8; photo by Kevin Gooding



An auditorium in the new Odeon Oldham; photo by Kevin Gooding.

Several of the auditoria are in rooms in the Grade II listed former Town Hall – I think this one is the former Courthouse; the judge's bench is hidden behind the retractable screen. The CTA visited last August – see report p8.

Important Notice

The Trustees and Committee of the Cinema Theatre Association are still seeking members who would be willing and able to take on the rôle(s) of the Treasurer and/or Membership Secretary. The present incumbent wishes to retire from the positions but will continue to be available to train, guide and support the person(s) appointed.

Neither job requires the commitment of more than a few hours per week, although this would be a quite a regular basis. The tasks involved require the use of a Windows-based computer with a printer and e-mail capability – other software would be supplied if required. Attendance and/or reporting to the meetings of the Main Committee would be necessary; these meetings are held roughly two-monthly in the early evening at a Central London location. Additionally attendance at and reporting to the AGM would be expected.

If you feel that you have the capability and interest but require more information to make a decision to apply, please make contact initially by e-mail to [subs@cta-uk.org] and include your phone number and the time that you are usually available, if you would like to talk about the rôle(s).

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Despite another big 36 page edition, I am still very tight for space. I'm afraid I had no room for holiday snaps and, although I have some held over, I would still welcome some more. I also couldn't fit in the index to last year's Bulletins and I hope I'll be able to include it next time.

On p16 there is a very comprehensive article by Hector Hill on Walturdaw. CTA Scotland sent me a couple of letters from Walturdaw to the Broadway Prestwick, which are in their archive. I had no room to put them on the same page as the Walturdaw article so I have put one below. On p12 is the first of a short series of articles by Ben Doman on some Bath cinemas; there will be another one next time. Also next time will be some items I have held over, including one from Fabian Breckels on his time with Rank, more *From Pictures to Pints* by Gavin McGrath and hopefully Ron Knee's account of the Plaza/Gaumont Southsea.

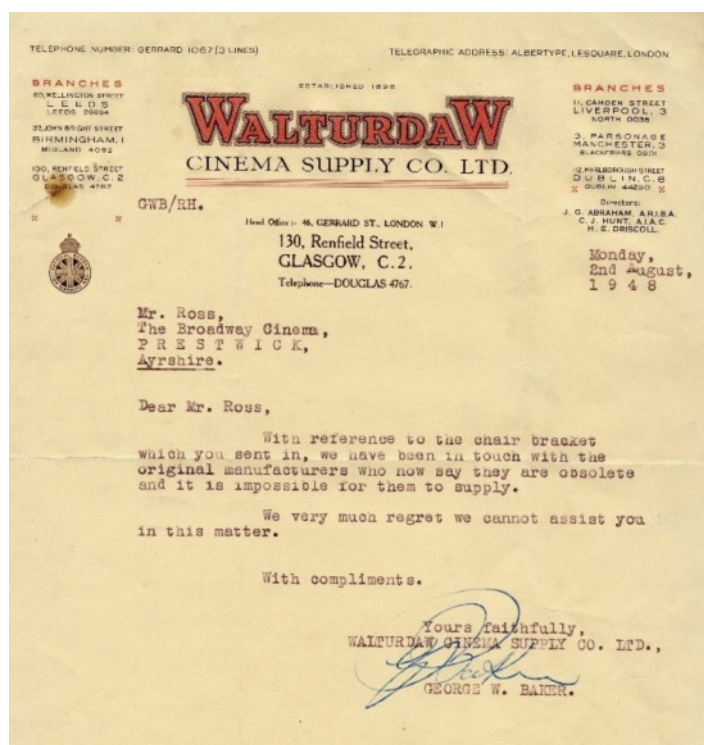
On p32 are two letters following up from the report on the North Warwickshire visit in the last Bulletin. I have printed them verbatim. You will see that one refers to a Roy Wyatt and the other to a Roy Whyatt. We contacted Peter Lea, who organised the visit and he came back with Ray Whyatt. So we have three different versions of the name – I wonder which one is correct?

If you didn't see the Michael Portillo programme on Channel 5 on the New Victoria / Odeon Bradford and would like to, email your editor for details.

Don't forget I am still looking to retire from the post of Bulletin Editor in the not too distant future. If you would like to consider taking over, please email me to find out what is involved.

Happy New Year.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



Reprinted AGAIN due to popular demand..!

ABC – THE FIRST NAME IN ENTERTAINMENT
by Allen Eyles

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

Ordering details on p5.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
WEDNESDAY 20 FEBRUARY

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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enquiry; this address will be monitored and e-mails redirected if necessary.

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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.

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VISITS AND EVENTS

New Screens for Old...

A South London Cinema resurrection

Wednesday 13 February; organised by Kevin Gooding



The new Everyman Crystal Palace; photo by Kevin Gooding

New cinema screens are on the increase with the takeover and enhancement of existing cinemas and redevelopment of other properties. Companies such as Everyman, Picturehouse and Curzon are spearheading this new flurry of activity.

This event will kick off at 10am at the recently opened Everyman Crystal Palace, a venue which has seen a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing in recent years; film, bingo and church ownership to name but a few. Moving on later using public transport to the West Norwood Picturehouse, we are also hoping to secure entry to another venue before finishing at the former Capitol Forest Hill, now operating as a JD Wetherspoons pub.

A charge of £5.00 for the visit will be collected on the day. Visit notes and light refreshments included. Please register your interest on the visits and events phone number, 020 8800 8393.

Getting There: The Everyman Crystal Palace is situated in Church Road, Crystal Palace, SE19. The London Overground station is about ten minutes' walk away and the cinema is directly served by many bus services, including routes 3, 122, 157, 202, 227, 249 & 363.

The CTA's Swedish Adventure

By David Trevor-Jones

Saturday 23 February at 5:30pm (doors open 5:00pm)



The auditorium of the Hemsegården; photo by Kevin Gooding

The main aim in this event will be to show the amazing set of small rural cinemas – no fewer than twelve single screen 'Bios' – which the CTA party visited in Gotland in August 2018. We will also show a little of this probably little-known holiday island and its UNESCO World Heritage listed capital, Visby.

As well as the location of a somewhat astonishing film-going culture, Gotland and in particular the small island of Fårö off its northern tip, have provided many film locations. The CTA party puzzled over the location of the final scene in Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice* (1986) and peered into the woods surrounding Ingmar Bergman's house to try to glimpse the location for much of *Persona* (1966). If the technical challenges can be met these might be shown on film as well as in our 2018 souvenir pictures. Before setting off for Visby the party visited the newly and impressively restored Capitol cinema in Stockholm, which will be recalled and if time allows there may be some vintage images of long-gone cinemas visited on earlier CTA visits to Sweden's capital.

Björn and Anne-Marie Alnebo, the organisers of our Gotland adventure, hope to attend and we hope to add a Swedish theme to the catering to make this a truly Swedish evening.

Venue: The Gallery, Alan Baxter Associates (address below).

Admission on the door: Members and Guests: £10 each, includes wine, soft drinks and light refreshments.

An Evening of Short Illustrated Talks

Saturday 16 March at 5:30pm (doors open 5:00pm)

SO JUST WHO WAS THIS MAN? BY DAVID VINNELS

Some CTA members will no doubt have heard of, or possibly own a copy of the book *Modern Theatres and Cinemas* by P Morton Shand, published in 1930. This seminal book, which despite the title deals principally with cinema design, was virtually the only major study of the subject published in Britain for nearly forty years. And what makes Morton Shand's book still so interesting today is that it is not merely a study of the subject but rather an outspoken polemic that denounces as much as it praises and probably enrages as many readers as are enthused by it. The author led an intriguing lifestyle but is barely remembered at all nowadays and surprisingly little has been written about him, yet he played a significant role throughout the first half of the 20th Century in the cultural life of Britain. For several years David Vinnels has been researching Morton Shand and his talk will endeavour to unravel the complex tale of this extraordinary man and his amazingly eclectic life and work.

FROM SIDNEY TO SYDNEY. BY GERALD GLOVER

In his illustrated talk *From Sidney to Sydney*, Gerald Glover (CTA Public Relations Officer) tells of his move from Granada Theatres (Sidney Bernstein) to Sydney (Australia) where he leased the Mayfair Theatre (cinema) Castlereagh Street at the end of its theatrical life. Afterwards he moved to Melbourne, where he managed Barry Humphries *At Least You Can Say You've Seen It* at the Comedy Theatre, *Lilian Gish and the Movies* at the Princess Theatre, *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas* at His (not Her) Majesty's Theatre and Abel Gance's *Napoleon* with full orchestra in Melbourne Concert Hall.

DELVING INTO THE CTA'S DIGITAL ARCHIVE.

BY RICHARD NORMAN

The CTA's Archive hopes to be on the move shortly to relocate from its temporary storage location in Bow, London to a new permanent site (details should be announced soon). Whilst in its temporary location, a lot of work has been done to compile a section devoted to recorded media (eg VHS cassette tapes, CDs and DVDs) and with some technical transfer this now forms the basis of the CTA's digital media archive. The content is varied and includes CTA visits, TV broadcasts, members' amateur footage, etc, all with a cinema/theatre related theme. The digital archive has been available as a resource and, from time to time, used to supplement the talks organised by the CTA. A few examples of interest, possibly unseen, have been chosen to be shown during the evening.

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

Admission on the door: Members and Guests: £10 each, includes wine, soft drinks and light refreshments.

Getting there: On leaving Farringdon Underground (old) station (not the Turnmill Street exit) turn left – or when leaving Farringdon Main Line (new) station, turn right – walk east 150 yards towards the 'SnappySnaps' shop. The entrance to the Gallery is opposite; walk through the large gates and across the courtyard to the far end, turn right down the steps and you're there!

Pavilion at 90 and CTA Wessex Launch

Monday 18 / Tuesday 19 March

These two events are linked but members can select either or both, which will take place in the Bournemouth and Poole area of Dorset this spring. Long-standing CTA members David Eve and Gary Trinder have relocated to Poole and, having for many years organised visits for the CTA in the North, hope to arrange things on the South Coast. With this in mind we are launching CTA Wessex and are having a social evening on Monday 18 March in Poole with a buffet and some entertainment. We are looking at a venue near to a railway station on the Waterloo-Poole line if anyone wants to come down from London for the day.



The Bournemouth Pavilion in May 2006

The next day Tuesday, members who wish to stay over will have the opportunity of having a tour of the Regent Cinema/Theatre Christchurch, which includes a museum of cinema equipment and displays of local cinema history, which has been lovingly put together by John, Phillip and Barry, all CTA members. This will take place in the morning and in the evening we will be attending the Pavilion Bournemouth's 90th birthday celebration with a screening of the Warner Brothers classic, *42nd Street*. This will be a Gala style presentation with an orchestra before the screening and a chance to hear the wonderful Compton Organ, which has been under the careful watch of the Pavilion's Christian Knighton for many years.

I have not reserved any accommodation for members at this stage as individual's may wish to attend part or all of the two days of activities. Once I get an indication of those who may wish to attend in March, I will respond with more detailed plans. It would be useful however to know which elements appeal to members.

Please send SAE to: CTA Wessex, Far Ends, 28 Courtenay Road, Lower Parkstone, Poole, BH14 0HD.

East is Best – Part 2

Wednesday 20 March 11:00am – approx 3:30pm
Organised by Ken Roe

As a follow-up to our successful "East is Best" visit to Shoreditch, Dalston and Hoxton on 4 July 2018 visiting Shoreditch Town Hall, the Rio Cinema Dalston (film show) and Hoxton Hall, we will return to this area of East London, which is undergoing a revival.

Our visit begins at 11:00am at Earth (former Savoy/ABC/Konak/Ace) on Stoke Newington Road, Stoke Newington. Designed by ABC's in-house architect William Riddell Glen, it opened on 26 October 1936 as the 1,890-seat Savoy Cinema. It was considered one of Glen's best surviving unaltered cinemas and was last visited by the CTA on 30 October 1983 when it was operating as the Ace Cinema. It closed on 16 February 1984 and the building became a snooker club. The auditorium was divided, with the circle becoming unused and the entrance foyer converted into retail use. Eventually the circle foyer (with its plaster ceiling removed) became a snooker club and the stalls became a Turkish community centre. The former circle seating area remained derelict and a home to flocks of pigeons. In 2017, the building was purchased by the owners of Village Underground (an arts venue) in Shoreditch. Planning permission was approved and in February 2018 funding of £1.9 million was raised to convert the building into Hackney Arts Centre. Tons of rubbish and pigeon poo (and dead birds) were removed in a clean-up of the former circle and it reopened as Earth (Evolutionary Arts Hackney) in September 2018. A week of classic films was screened in December 2018.



The former Savoy [etc] Stoke Newington in September 2004

We will then take a bus from Kingsland High Road (or Overground from Dalston Junction) to Shoreditch, where we will visit three currently operating cinemas, which will be 'first time visits' for the CTA. Each venue has a café where members may purchase coffee, tea and cakes etc.

CLOSE-UP FILM CENTRE, SCLATER STREET (OFF BRICK LANE)

This single-screen cinema opened in 2014. The 40-seat cinema is equipped with 35mm reel to reel, 16mm and digital projection and screens revival and classic films.

ELECTRIC CINEMA – SHOREDITCH, REDCHURCH STREET

Opened as the Aubin Cinema on 20 May 2010 in the basement of a former post-war office building. It is a luxury cinema with 45 seats. In late 2014 it was taken over by the owners of the Electric Cinema, Notting Hill and re-named Electric Cinema – Shoreditch.

RICHMIX CINEMA, BETHNAL GREEN ROAD

This three-screen cinema opened on 28 April 2006. It is a conversion of a former garment factory and the screens, located on different floors, seat 181 (equipped with both digital and 35mm projection), 132 & 59, both with digital projection only.

While in the Shoreditch area we hope to see the exteriors of two 1930s cinemas: Odeon Stepney / Naz Cinema (former Mayfair Cinema), Brick Lane (1936-1967) architects: Kemp & Tasker, 1,500 seats; façade only, auditorium demolished for flats. Luxor Cinema, Commercial Street (1933-1939) architect: Charles Brett, 871 seats, converted into flats

Booking details: This is a free visit for members only. Please register to attend by phoning the visit registration line 0208 800 8393 and leave your message on the ansaphone, quoting "East is Best", your CTA membership number and contact phone number. Registration closes on Saturday 16 March.

Getting there: London Overground (Dalston Kingsland): turn left out of the station and a short 5 minutes' walk along Kingsland High Road (walking past the Rio Cinema, Dalston), the Earth building is on Stoke Newington Road (a continuation of Kingsland High Road) on the second block along on the same side as the Rio Cinema. Or London Overground (Dalston Junction) turn left out of the station, then take a right along Kingsland High Road passing Dalston Kingsland Overground station and the Rio Cinema etc. Buses 242 & 149 run from Liverpool Street station to Dalston Kingsland Overground station.

Coming Soon

Cinema Theatre Association AGM

London – Saturday 1 June 2019

The Annual General Meeting for 2019 will be held at a venue in London this year. The location with further information will be published in the next edition of the Bulletin.

The Cinemas and Theatres of Northern Portugal

A visit to Porto, early September 2019

The deferred trip to Porto is now in the planning stage in conjunction with Travel Editions. We plan to stay in Porto for 5 to 6 days within the first two weeks of September. A package including visits, hotels, flights and transfers is being arranged.

Please send a SAE for further details to Ray Ritmeester, 66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB; please mark your envelope 'Porto'

Other (non CTA) events are on page 27

PUBLICATIONS

Back Numbers Available

PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

Listed below are the back numbers of *Picture House* that are still available, along with the main articles the particular issue contains.

No 6	£1.50	Television in the Cinema; Atherley Southampton; Hippodrome , Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; ABC in NW London.
No 17	£3.00	Special Issue featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; Ideal Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; Granada Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; Albert Hall Sheffield; Regal Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Gaumont Managers; Carlton Swansea; Committee's Choice.
No 26	£4.50	Paramount Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; Electric Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New Victoria/ Apollo ; Whiteladies Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; Torbay Cinema ; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; Apollo Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: Essoldo – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the Essoldo Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New Victoria Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	Beaufort Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophane lighting; Imitations of Odeon; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; The Clifton Circuit; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the Electric Palace Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated Cinemas; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; Palace Conwy; Carlton Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two Regals ; Odeon North Finchley; Majestic Oxford; Films at the Royal Albert Hall .
No 40	£6.00	Tolmer Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham – a Granada man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50 th Anniversary; Plaza Stockport; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Majestic Leeds; Pascal J Stienlet.
No 42	£6.00	Odeon Elephant & Castle, Plaza Crosby; Depot Lewes; Cineworld Chelsea; Gaumont Sheffield Figures.

There are also available a few second-hand copies of out-of-print issues 9, 10, 14/15, 16, 20, 22, 23 & 24, priced £5.00 each, plus postage. A list of their contents was printed on p4 of Bulletin 52/2 or can be obtained by SAE or email from the Sales Officer or Bulletin Editor.

BULLETINS

We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 2017 are £4.00 per year (6 issues); individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2018 and 2019 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)

Campbeltown Picture House – A Century of Cinema
£10.00 plus postage.

The Wee Pictures

A History of The Picture House (Campbeltown) Ltd
£4.99 plus postage.

Ordering

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

Orders to Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales, 34, Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN. Cheques/POs payable to Cinema Theatre Association, or send credit/debit card number with expiry date and security code. A complete sales list is available by sending an SAE or can be seen on the CTA website [www.cta-uk.org] where you can also place your order. using PayPal. A sales list is sent with every order.

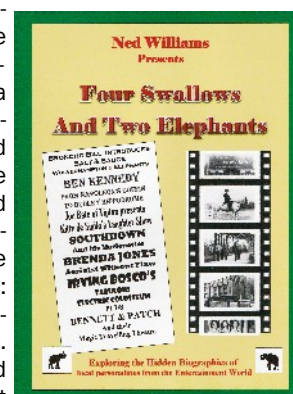
Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

Four Swallows and Two Elephants

By Ned Williams, 182 pages, paperback, fully illustrated.

ISBN 978-1-5272-3052-1. Published by Uralia Press, 23 Westland Road, Wolverhampton. WV3 9NZ.
£13.50 – post-free to CTA members.

CTA member Ned Williams is well-known as the author of *Black Country Cinemas and Theatres* and here, in his 52nd book, he explores the hidden biographies of seven men and women whose lives criss-crossed the Black Country whilst pursuing their interest in entertainment. The first thing is to find out who they were – sometimes their name is something of a mystery. The author then tells their story, illustrated with photographs and sometimes their own words. They come from a bygone world of fairground shows, variety theatres, travelling theatres, early presentation of film and the circus. The seven personalities are: Broncho Bill, Irving Bosco, JBT, Southdown, Ben Kennedy and Brenda Jones. Two of the characters – Irving Bosco and Ben Kennedy – are of particular interest to CTA members as they presented film during that interesting period from 1897 to 1910, and then operated early cinemas, with Kennedy building the famous Dudley Hippodrome and adjoining Plaza. Other characters also have cinema connections. This is a fascinating and very readable study into a lost world of variety and entertainment!



CINEMAS IN BRITAIN

A **MUST** for your collection

A History of Cinema Architecture

by Richard Gray

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

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

Special price for CTA members

£29.50 + £6.00 postage from

Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer

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



CAMPAIGNING TO SAVE YOUR HISTORIC CINEMAS

By Tim Hatcher

Grade I Listed

Scaffolding has been erected around applicable sections of the **Granada** in Tooting in order to facilitate removal of the greenery that has established itself upon its façade. Somewhat ignominiously, this gracious theatre has recently been accorded the new undignified appellation of 'Buzz Bingo'. It is reported that the Wurlitzer organ will next year again undergo restoration, necessitated by the effects of flooding following immediately upon its last renovation.

Grade II Listed



The Royalty Harborne in June 2008

Regrettably the long-running case of the **Royalty** at Harborne [Birmingham] has seemingly been terminated by a conflagration, which has destroyed the auditorium. Information concerning any possible rehabilitation of the property is to be sought from local planners.

Following the previously reported cessation of bingo at the **Ritz** in Ilkeston, the freehold of the building is now for sale at a price of £600,000. Allegedly the annual rental potential was £47,000; however, the town centre appears to have fallen into a distinctly depressed state, with many premises currently vacant, which reduces the attractiveness of the cinema to future business aspirants.

The recent listing of the **Carlton** in London's Haymarket is indeed gratifying to note. Whilst the Listing Report notes several features specific to the building that qualify this cinema-theatre for its new-found status, it is to be hoped that in future submissions Historic England will look more favourably upon other cinemas which have suffered varying degrees of alteration. It is of interest to note that HE now admits that its previous estimate of the number of cinemas built in the two decades of the 1920s and 1930s was overstated by a multiple of approximately 2.7. It is thus decidedly concerning to discover a mistake of this magnitude arising in such a body and leads one to question the extent to which this fundamental error may have adversely influenced consideration of past rejected applications.



The Granada Kingston in April 2006

An objection has been forwarded to plans submitted for alterations to the nightclub operating within the **Granada** at Kingston-upon-Thames. These would impact inappropriately not only upon the circle lounge but also, more fundamentally, upon the integrity of the auditorium ceiling.

Although rumours were rife that the owners of the remains and plot of the **Regent** in Lyme Regis were intending to dispose of the site, it is now reported that plans are progressing to reinstate a cinema, despite suggestions of a substantial shortfall in the proceeds arising from the insurance claim relating to the damaged structure.

The Conservation Officer of the Council local to the **Odeon** in York has been contacted concerning deterioration of the cinema's external brickwork. Photographs of the affected areas have accompanied the communication.



The Odeon Ashford in April 2004

Ashford Council's website now states its intent for the **Odeon** to become a multi-use performance space; the Theatres Trust is currently preparing a report on its potential for theatrical usage. Meanwhile, unsurprisingly considering its era of construction, asbestos has been found within.

In similar circumstance, the discovery of asbestos in the **Odeon** in Leicester Square – again surely not entirely unexpected – has delayed its scheduled reopening. The renovation includes utilisation of the partitioned former rear stalls as a café, with the first-floor foyer featuring a cocktail bar. More significantly, the finely painted safety curtain will be permanently fixed in the 'out' position, thus preventing appreciation of the accomplished brushmanship.

The Conservation Officer in whose purview the extant elements of the **Regent** at Hinckley lie has expressed his objective of including them in the local list and extending a conservation area to encompass them. This will prove beneficial if anticipated plans to demolish the rotunda are tabled.

The **Byron** at Hucknall is currently offered for sale but has also been granted Asset of Community Value status.



The Waterloo IMAX showing the mural now covered with advertising

Planning permission has been sought to replace the **IMAX** at London's Waterloo with a tower block. The current building features a mural by Howard Hodgkin, presently obscured by advertisements; fees for this publicity site are amongst the highest in the capital because of the prominence of the display and the volume of passing traffic. Artistic and commercial pressures may thus combine in defence of the current structure.

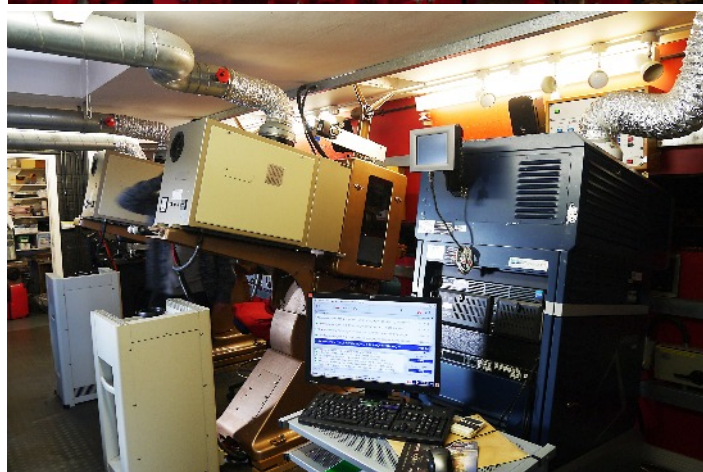
BERKHAMSTED DOUBLE BILL

A report of the CTA visit on Tuesday 16 October 2018

By Adam Unger

Photos by Kevin Gooding

Fine weather made a good start to the day in this attractive Hertfordshire town, commencing at the Rex in the morning. The Rex opened in 1938, designed by David Evelyn Nye for the Shipman and King circuit and is now grade II listed. We were made most welcome by the staff, with complimentary refreshments laid on for us and the opportunity to roam around the auditorium, including the projection box. Jon the projectionist was most informative about the operation of the box, particularly with regard to the digital set-up and also demonstrated the sound system. Having lain derelict for many years, the Rex reopened in 2004, restored by James Hannaway. It has been a great success story often with sell-out performances. The enchanting auditorium, with its scallop-shell wall lights and decorative floral proscenium is probably the work of Mollo and Egan; it is well maintained, making for a wonderful space to view a film in. It is hoped that one day, the former main entrance foyer block (currently The Gatsby restaurant) can be acquired and incorporated back into the Rex.



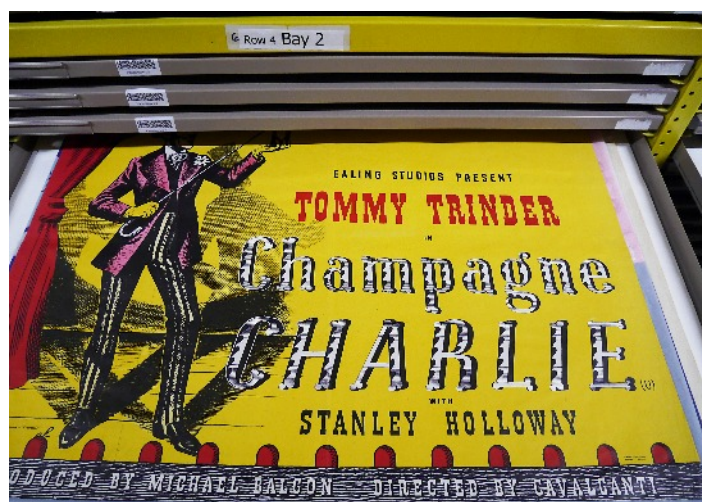
The exterior, proscenium and box at the Rex

After lunch, we all gathered outside the Rex to be transported by a fleet of taxis to the nearby BFI National Archive, which houses the Poster Collection. On arrival and checking in, we were welcomed by Dr Claire Smith, (Curator, Stills Posters & Designs) and Nigel Arthur (Curatorial Archivist) who were to conduct the two tours. My group, led by Nigel, began in the Board Room with material related to cinema buildings laid out on tables. Of particular interest was a large photographic album of Union Cinemas, taken at their time of completion. Alongside were contemporary photographs of the Granada Tooting and others, a collection of photos featuring cinema queues, which included the Plaza Lower Regent Street for the film *Darling* in 1965; press books regarding publicity were also of great interest.

We then moved onto the poster collection itself, where the temperature was noticeably cooler in the poster store, this being the temperature level needed to best conserve the posters, which are housed in drawers along the aisles [R]. The collection holds some 20,000 posters.

The earliest poster shown was c1912, which pre-dated any starring credits being printed on the poster. It was during the 1930s that the landscape format for British posters first appeared, known as the 'Quad' and now an established format. For the post-war period, examples of the work of the legendary designer Saul Bass were shown, noted for his minimalist graphic approach, we saw one of his best-known designs for Hitchcock's 1958 *Vertigo*. The Ealing Studios posters were well represented, which included, *The Man in the White Suit*, *Champagne Charlie* [below] and two versions of *The Cruel Sea*, as the distributors thought the first version by Charles Murray too stark and forbidding, which led to an alternative version being produced. It was S John Woods, appointed as head of advertising at Ealing in 1943, who was responsible for the high quality of the posters produced, commissioning artists including John Piper, Edward Bawden and John Minton. The distinctive 'woodcut' style posters, designed for the Academy Cinema in London by Peter Strausfeld were shown, including Scorsese's 1973 *Mean Streets*, which is now highly sought after. Examples of Polish posters of Hollywood films from the 1960s were executed in a stark almost abstract style. We learnt that in later years the American film companies would only permit their own designs to be used. We concluded by looking at some more recent work – the most noticeable change being the use of photography taking over from hand-drawn artwork.

Thanks go to Beth and Natalie at the Rex and Dr Claire Smith and Nigel Arthur at the BFI Archive.



APOLLO'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS – AND MORE...

A report of the CTA visit

Monday 27 – Wednesday 29 August 2018

By Mike Wood

29 August 1938 was an auspicious occasion for the Manchester suburb of Ardwick when it saw the opening gala performance of the **Apollo** Ciné-Variety Theatre. Eighty-years on and this fabulous building (now listed grade II) is still providing big name entertainment, now as Manchester's biggest and best music venue and something that needed to be celebrated.



This visit was to be a blockbuster farewell from David Eve and Gary Trinder as CTA North but do not worry as their following act in Nick Taylor and Rob Chesterfield were on hand, with Nick as bus captain and tour manager. David and Gary worked with Live Nation's General Manager Phil Rodgers, Peter Gates their health and safety representative and especially Stage Manager Rob Lloyd, who is clearly an enthusiast for the building and its history, in setting up the **Apollo** for the Wednesday anniversary date.



The exterior and auditorium seating at the Light Stockport

Over the years we have come to realise that David Eve has magical powers of persuasion, so that there were bound to be surprises in store along the way but not until we had had a look at the new **Light** (2017) in Stockport and then spent the evening at the storied **Plaza** (1932 Thornley Listed II*) where Nick Taylor did one of his tours alongside Gary Trinder, for it was Gary had who steered the almost £4m restoration. We were based at the newly opened Holiday Inn Express right by Stockport station, thus making travel relatively straightforward, despite some problems with the train network.



The façade, café and proscenium at the Plaza Stockport

Next morning, after a good breakfast, it was early onto the coach bound for Rochdale and the Regal/ABC/Cannon (1938 Norton with Glen) now a Wetherspoon pub. The pub inhabits the old Stalls and Foyer area but nothing is visible that relates to the cinema. Curiously it features an illuminated replica organ console plus organist above the bar, although it was never thus equipped. Wetherspoon hospitality is alive and well in Rochdale and the manager kindly took small groups of us upstairs to see the original upper level.

Back on the coach, we headed for Liverpool City centre, for a visit that I thought would be beyond even David's powers of persuasion; nevertheless we alighted outside the Forum/ABC/Cannon (1931 Shennan with Glen, listed grade II – should be II* in my opinion) to find a Council representative on hand to facilitate access to this fine building. Liverpool has been unkind in its recent treatment of theatres and cinemas, with 87 listed by Cinema Treasures, of which 76 have closed and 38 of those now demolished, including the famously fought-over Futurist opposite the Forum. Various plans have come and gone for the Forum, empty for twenty years. However, our host had ensured that the lights were on and even escorted some of us up to the Circle. David's negotiations to gain access had taken months but were certainly worth it.

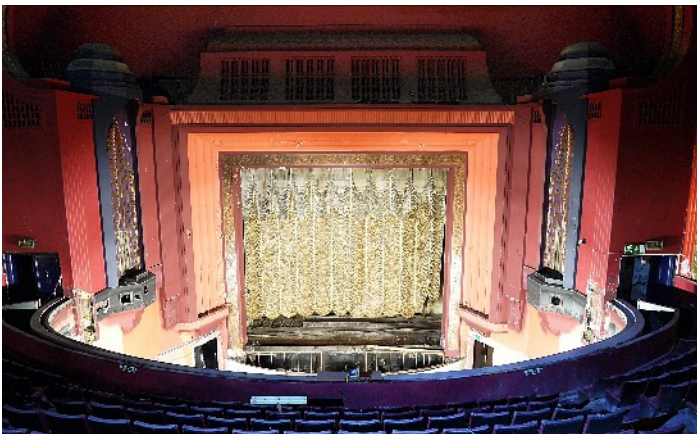


The façade and disused upstairs at the former Regal Rochdale



The former Queen's/Essoldo Ellesmere Port with figures in balcony

We then headed South, stopping at Ellesmere Port and the nice bijou Queens/Essoldo (1913 Listed Grade II) which had gone to bingo in 1968 but is now a bathroom showroom and very tidy inside, with an amusing tableau up in the balcony of manikins dressed in Edwardian costume, though the seemingly plain proscenium is mostly hidden from view. This was certainly worth the stop and then it was back on the bus bound for Chester.



The proscenium at the Forum Liverpool



The former Gaumont Birkenhead

Back on the coach we crossed through the Mersey Tunnel to Birkenhead for an exterior view of the Savoy (1938 Glen), which in later years was on snooker but a more recent fire has ensured its closure and probably it is soon to be lost. Our next visit was to the Gaumont (1938 Trent with Mackay) which is now a furniture store and open to explore. Much of the interior is hidden by retail paraphernalia but the exterior features plaques depicting Pierrot, Pierrette and Clown and similar to those on the soon-to-be-lost Chelsea Gaumont Palace / Odeon / Curzon (1934 Trent) which are by Newbury Abbot Trent (though at Birkenhead the opening press release copied in the visit notes makes no mention). The cinema sits across the road from the entrance to the park designed by Joseph Paxton, wherein is a nice café, which provides generous scoops of Italian ice cream and therefore perfect for our lunch break.



The former Odeon Chester as Storyhouse and the entrance to the theatre through the original cinema proscenium



The original stairs in the former Odeon now in use in Storyhouse



The auditorium of the new Storyhouse theatre

The conversion into Storyhouse of the Odeon (1936 Bullivant / Weedon Listed Grade II) has divided opinion. It had been closed and lain empty since 2007 until purchased by Chester City Council for conversion into a cultural 'hub' featuring library, café/bar, small screen and two new-build theatre spaces. In the event this has been done with some style and thoughtfulness in retaining key stylistic features and it appears a popular destination. One of the library staff showed us around, although the screen was operating and unavailable, so back on the bus and returning to Stockport, where an evening meal had been arranged for us.



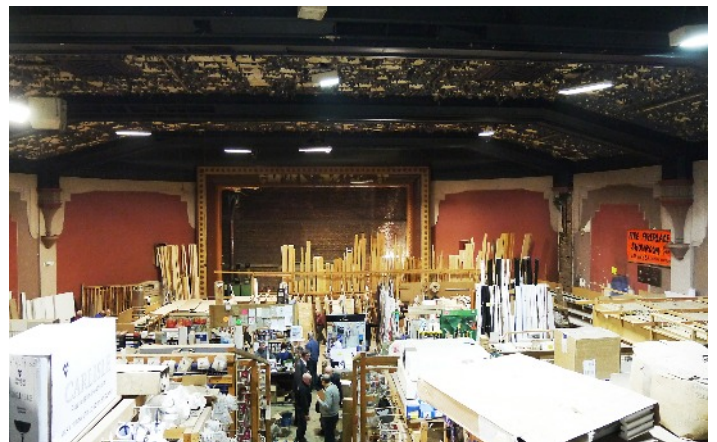
The new Odeon in the former Town Hall Oldham

The Apollo anniversary day arrived but before the afternoon's main event, we journeyed to Oldham and the new Odeon, which is a 2016 RIBA award winning conversion of the Grade II listed old Town Hall. Seven screens have been inserted into the original building plus a new glass and steel circulation hall built alongside it and with great care taken to restore some of the Victorian features within. The Council was the client with the cinema operator apparently doing the technical fit-out and the result is stunning.



The Coliseum Oldham

A little way across town is the Oldham Coliseum (1887 Whittaker), a theatre, which had started out as a wooden circus building, later altered for music hall and then drama, with a projection box added in 1931 and a new stage house subsequently. This was a timely visit as there are advanced plans for a new building on another site. Just opposite is the Kings (1911) now a nightclub and the disused Gaumont (1937 Simister & Taylor) which was a complete re-build internally of the Grand Theatre and Opera House; both exterior viewing only.



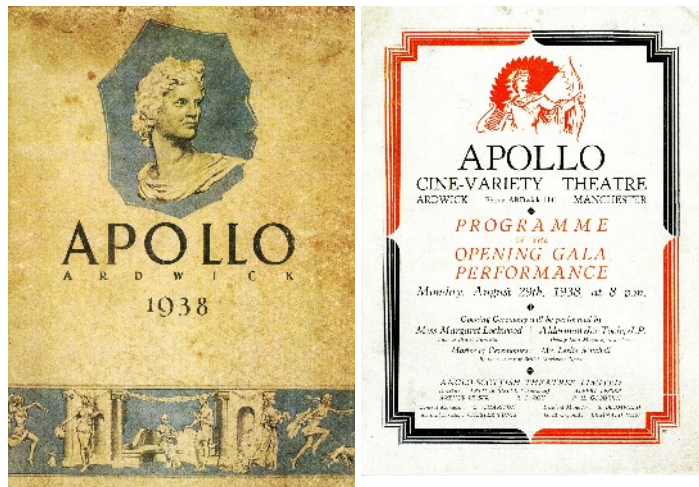
The exterior and interior of the former Adelphi Moston

On the way into Manchester we stopped at Moston for the Adelphi (1937 Yeardsley) which replaced the Empress Picture House of 1914. It went to bingo in 1962 and then a hardware store for many years. Now up for sale, it was good to be allowed to explore this large hall built in stadium configuration and now full of building materials, two friendly staff and three friendly dogs, uncertain of what the future holds for them.

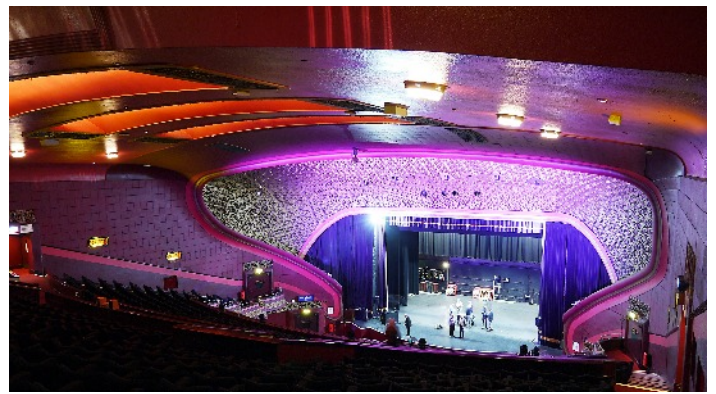
About midday, we arrived at the Apollo/ABC Ardwick (1938 Cummings & Irvine Listed Grade II) now re-branded as the O₂ apollo and operated as a live music venue by Academy Music Group for Live Nation. Built to accommodate 1,750 patrons on two levels, with some seats in the stepped balcony sideslips, it had a large stage, twelve dressing rooms and, on opening, a Compton Theatrone organ 'a musical miracle – no organ chambers – no pipes' and in the projection box Simplex (possibly replaced with Ross) with Peerless Magnarc lamp-houses and Western Electric sound.

The Apollo's exterior cream and black faience is unsurprisingly now showing eighty years of weathering but the Mollo & Egan designed interior is in excellent condition, with plans to reinstate the Holophane cove lighting with LED and new house curtains on display as we entered the auditorium.

A buffet lunch was set in the Circle lounge bar and a film show in the lobby with contemporary clips collected and shown by Steve Hills, the last projectionist to have run those projectors upstairs in 1986. Rob Lloyd took groups up into the box, nooks and crannies and outside to the currently disused ballroom. A really nice surprise was then to sit in the Stalls as the lights dimmed and the safety curtain lowered, revealing a big screen painted on it and a beam of light as Steve ran some more film on the old projector.



Pages from the Apollo 1938 opening programme



The proscenium at the Apollo

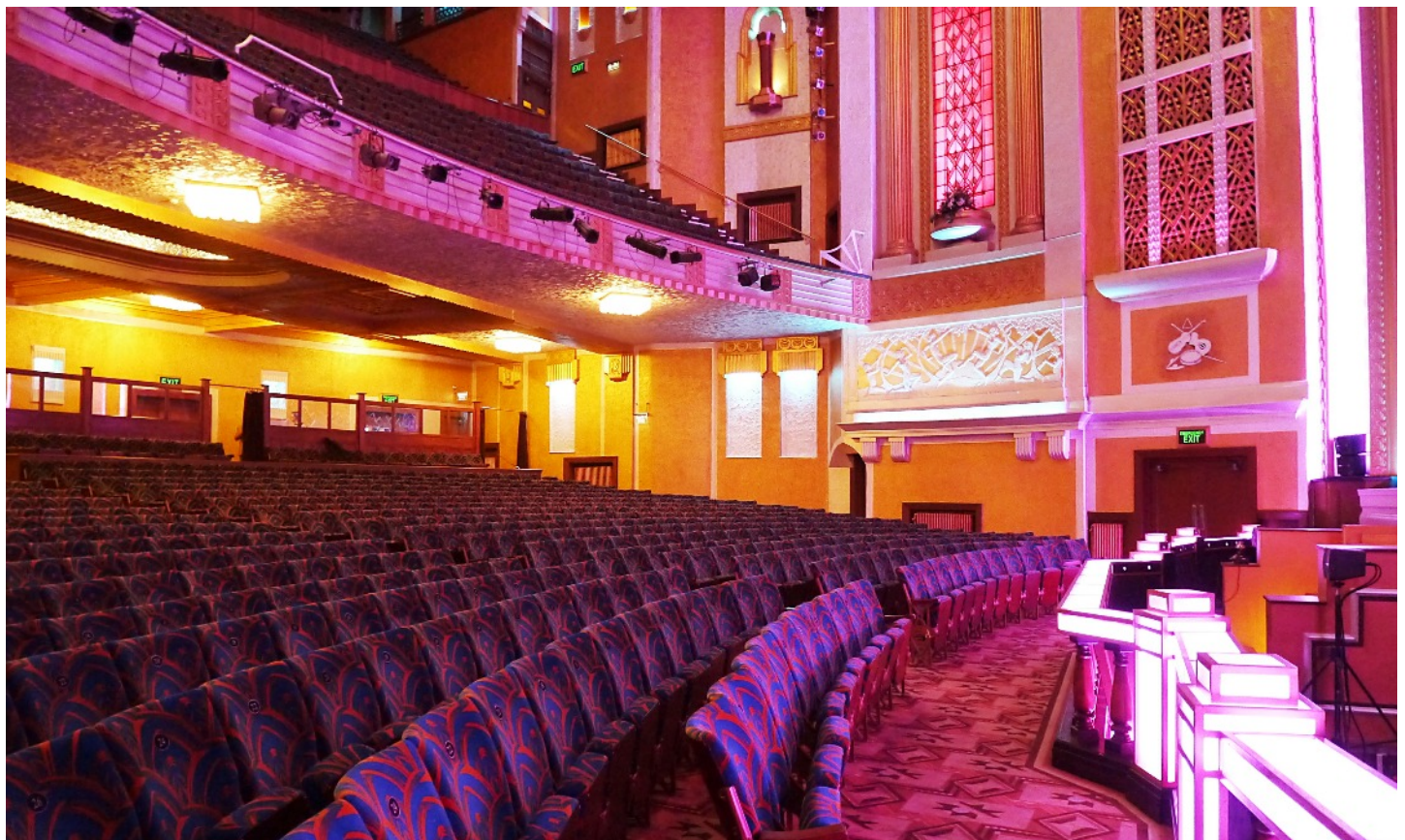
As befits an eightieth birthday, there was toast to the Apollo, which is showing all the signs of rocking and rolling towards its centenary! Thanks for a great visit to all of our hosts and staff at the venues and to David and Gary CTA North

[Links for more:](#)

Oldham Odeon architectural description: [www.goo.gl/ptzTLb]



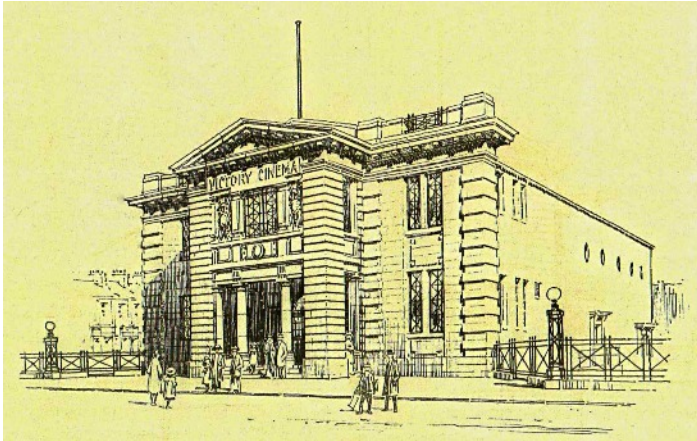
The CTA group in the box at the Apollo



The auditorium at the Plaza Stockport

THE OLDFIELD PARK PICTURE HOUSE BATH

By Ben Doman

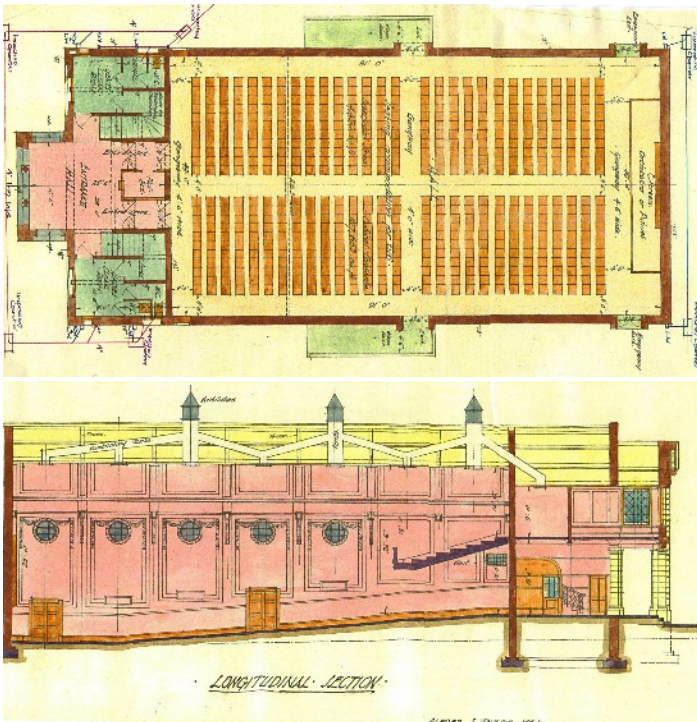


Architect's impression of the building, from the original plans

In November 1919 Alfred J Taylor produced a set of drawings for Mr S Gamlin Esq of Fishponds Bristol for a cinema, to be called the Victory, [above] in Shaftsbury Road, Oldfield Park, Bath. Sidney Gamlin owned three cinemas in Bristol. Work had started by June 1920 when the City surveyor was invited to inspect the foundation trenches.

"All roads led to the Oldfield Park Picture House in Shaftesbury Road," read the headline of the *Bath Chronicle*, when the Mayor of Bath, Alderman JH Cromer, opened the City's first suburban cinema on Thursday 1 September 1921. "From all directions, streams of people were wending their way towards this new rendezvous of amusement and the large audiences at both houses promised well for the new cinema." The Moorfields estate in the Oldfield Park area had been developed as a suburb of Bath since the turn of the Century and had now grown to a size large enough to warrant its own cinema.

The opening night audience was treated to "spiriting music" by the orchestra, under the direction of Mr Percy Stride and a large display of multi coloured flowers laid out in front of the screen.



Ground floor and cross section, from the original plans

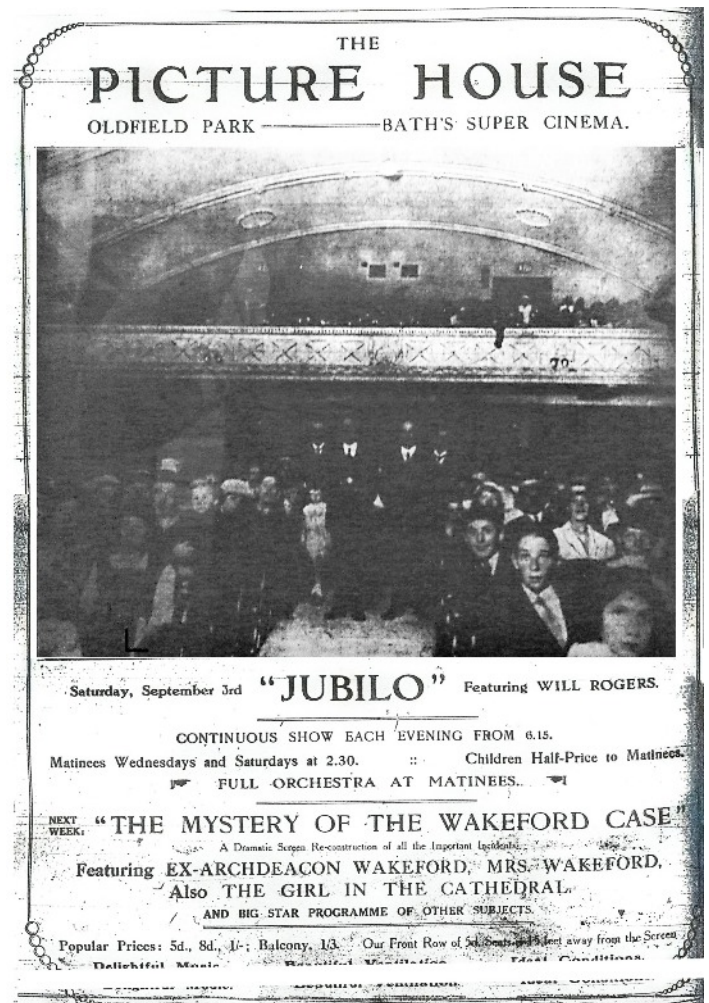
Mr Crossman, Chairman of the Directors, introduced the building. "We are met in a beautiful hall - anyway, it has cost a lot of money, so it ought to be one." He pointed out the rake of the floor, giving all persons an uninterrupted view of the screen. The balcony was built in a single span. There was no obstruction of any kind beneath it and the

seating being on the same principle of downstairs, everyone would have a good view. The proceeds of the evening were to be given to four different institutions: not only the Mayor's Royal United Hospital fund but also the British Legion, the Bath Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital and the Eye Hospital.

Mr Crossman went on to praise the orchestra and said if the pictures failed to draw patrons then the music would do so. He then introduced Mr Tuck, the new manager, in whom the directors had the utmost confidence. Before Mr Tuck's speech, Mr Crossman introduced the Mayor.

The Mayor said a few words about his fund for the Royal United Hospital, which had benefited from several of the cinema openings in Bath. He praised the architect, Mr Taylor and the builders, Messrs Long and Son. The Mayor then went on to mention the last two cinemas he had opened and the opportunity that these venues provided for educating people if the right kind of pictures were exhibited. He hoped the directors would "would make up their minds not to have anything in this house which could be in the slightest degree be described as 'shady'."

Mr A Tuck, the new manager, said he hoped the residents of Oldfield Park would give the Picture House their warm support and approval, assuring them that he would always do his best to provide clean entertainment. He thanked the Mayor for his kindness in coming there that evening and was backed up in this by Mr Gamlin (promoter of the scheme). The National Anthem was then played.



Advertising the opening of the Oldfield Picture House

The opening report in the *Chronicle* went on to describe the evening's filmed entertainment. "The stereoscopic effect produced by the silver screen was instantly noticed when the pictures were shown. Not only was each feature made to stand out clearly but also the soft mellow tone imparted to each picture was not only pleasing but also restful to the eye. The bill of entertainment was in keeping with an occasion such as the present one. A combination of the artistic and the dramat-

ic and, of course the mirthful, was a fare to suit everyone. *Jubilo*, the star picture, is a highly interesting film of the "Woolley West" and the exciting scenes were not spoilt by too much of the melodramatic, which is usually the case in pictures of this description. It was noted that the Brinsmead Concert Grand Pianoforte was supplied by Green and Marsh Ltd, who were the sole agents for the district. After the evening's entertainment, the directors were treated to a meal at the Red House in Bath, of which Alfred Taylor was also the owner.



The Oldfield Picture House Bath; photo from CTA Archive

The front of the building was of Bath stone ashlar, in a classical style. Three steps, on three sides of a protruding central section, lead up to an open waiting area. Two sets of entrance doors at the back of this area lead to the foyer itself. The Gents' and Ladies' toilets were sited on the left and right. There was a central paybox at the rear of the foyer, flanked on either side by double sets of doors leading to the stalls. Two sets of stairs either side of these ascended to the balcony level. A set of stairs under the left staircase lead down to a basement level where the boiler was situated. The balcony stairs led each side to small landings, with a set of toilets leading off each. Doors led directly into the balcony. The central portion of the balcony area contained the board room, projection and rewind rooms. The stalls floor sloped down towards the screen end, with a cross gangway halfway down and an exit either side. The hall was 91 feet long and 49 and a half feet wide with seating for 616, in four blocks. The screen was mounted directly on the end wall, with a small area in front for 'orchestra or piano' with an exit on both side walls. The balcony, which overhung the stalls seating by seven rows, was stepped and held 192 seats, over eight rows in three blocks, the back row being against the rear wall with no cross-over aisle. The projection room, being at balcony level, had ports lower than the head of the average standing patron. The balcony was supported by two concrete beams of 49 feet span. Reinforced concrete work was provided by the Indented Bar Co, with heating and ventilation by Messrs GN Haden & Sons Ltd of Trowbridge. Interior décor was by the Stratford-upon-Avon Applied Arts Company, who had previously worked with Alfred J Taylor at the Beau Nash in Westgate Street. Total cost of the building was given as £15,000, £2,000 more than the Beau Nash.

The walls forward of the balcony had five upright rectangles of plaster mouldings, surmounted by a circular window, surrounded by decorative mouldings, which created a swag extending down the side of the rectangle panel. The balcony had two plain rectangular mouldings on either side.

On 19 December 1924, the cinematograph license was transferred from Albert Tuck, who had been manager since the opening. There are two conflicting notes in the archives as to whom the license was transferred to but they both note the same day of transfer. The first was to an Oliver Thomas Hains, of Gorse Hill, Swindon, who had managed the *Electric Palace* Gorse Hill for around twelve months. He had previously managed the *King's Kinema* Westgate Street, Gloucester for 2½ years up to 20 May 1922. The second entry noted that the license transferred to one William Frances Burges of Combe Down, who was noted as a timber merchant. Cinema Proprietors are listed in the *Kine Yearbook* of 1926 as Perfect Picture Houses Ltd, of Chapel Row, Queens Square, Bath. The next manager to be noted was Arthur Maunder, who is mentioned in local press adverts in 1929.

The next milestone in the cinema, now being advertised as the *Oldfield Picture House*, was the installation of sound film apparatus. A Mr

George Holley, in an article in the *Bath Evening Chronicle*, recalled that as an apprentice electrician he helped install the sound system. The company was HL Bush & Co. Two large speakers were fitted either side of screen. Electricians worked all day Saturday and eleven hours Sunday to fit the British Talking Pictures Ltd sound system. A trained sound projectionist came from London to oversee work and to give training to projectionists.

Oldfield Picture House

OLDFIELD PARK, BATH

MONDAY, TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY
at 2.30, 6 and 8.15.

A FEAST OF ENTERTAINMENT

TALKING PICTURES

THE MIRACLE OF THE AGE

MAY McAVOY in "THE LITTLE SNOB"
(Silent Film).

Complete Change of Programme Mondays and Thursdays.
Frequent bus, tram and train Services. Two minutes walk from
Oldfield Park Halt (G.W.R.).

PARKING SPACE FREE FOR CARS

ADMISSION: Balcony, 1/6 & 1/3; Ground Floor, 1/-, 9d. & 6d. (including tax)

"Talking Pictures – the miracle of the age" announced the press block of 15 April 1929. Also showing that week was May McAvoy in *The Little Snob* (silent film). The cinema was advertising itself as showing "the only talking pictures in Bath". These 'talkies' may have been short novelty items in the mainly silent programme, as the *Bath and Wilts Chronicle & Herald* of 13 July 1929, announced;



"The Oldfield Picture House Oldfield Park, Bath takes great pleasure in announcing the presentation of the first full talking picture in Bath commencing Monday 15 July with the greatest and latest 100 per cent talking and singing feature *Syncopation* direct from its sensational presentation at the Regal Marble Arch, London." The suburban cinema beat the town centre Beau Nash to talkies by twelve days. The cinema was billed in the press block for this as the *Oldfield Cinema*, a name it seemed to alternate in the future press blocks with *Oldfield Picture House* up to December 1935.

The cinema doesn't seem to have been able to retain its managers for very long, as the license transferred on 23 September 1932, to William Henry Crossman and again on 10 April 1933 to George Humphries of Birmingham. It was noted in the archive documents that George Humphries was to hold the license for a period of twelve months from 1 October.

BEAU NASH Western Electric
Picture House, Westgate St., Bath. Phone 422
"SILENCE IS GOLDEN—UNTIL OUR SCREEN SPEAKS"
Today and tomorrow, The Incomparable—The Irresistible!
HAROLD LLOYD
IN HIS FIRST TALKIE
"WELCOME DANGER"
You've watched him before—in silence—NOW HEAR HIM SPEAK.
PERFECTAL MOTION IN LAUGHTER.

The **ASSEMBLY ROOMS** SUPER CINEMA
BATH'S PREMIER "TALKIE" THEATRE. PHONE 4225
Friday and Saturday: PASTOR BRICE
America's Foremost Chaplain in
"BE YOURSELF"
The Musical Story of the Reverend's Courtship and his memory.
A Story of Night Clubs, Cabarets and The Boring Ring.
CONTINUOUS FROM 2.30
Also
MOORE MARRIOTT and PAULINE JOHNSON
in
"THE FLYING SCOTSMAN"

Picturedrome SOUTHGATE STREET, BATH
TO-DAY and TO-MORROW:
LAURA SAVIDGE and FRIDOLF RHUDIN in
"A SAILOR'S FAREWELL"
(An amusing story of the adventures of a Coast Guard ship and his memory.)
and BOB STEELE in
"COME AND GET IT"
Glorious Version of Jack Ashford.

OLDFIELD CINEMA OLD FIELD PARK, BATH
Friday and Saturday: The TALKIE COMEDY RIOT.
"WISE GIRLS"
with J.C. and ELLIOTT SUGENT.
Monday Next: William Haines in "NAVY BLUES." A Breezy Comedy

The Oldfield Cinema is pushing its 'talkies' programme in this September 1930 advert, although the Beau Nash carries the much grander Western Electric logo in its press block.

Bath, requires facilities for swimming, Mr E Harris, the enterprising chairman and managing director of the Scala Cinema, has written to the Town Clerk of Bath offering to erect an up-to-date swimming bath, with slipper baths, on land adjacent to the cinema, provided the Corporation will take it over on a lease for a period of years. He has asked the Town Clerk to arrange for him to outline his scheme to the appropriate committee."

"Mr Harris, in addition to being associated with the Scala Cinema, Bath, controls the Scala Cinema in Zetland, Bristol, the Plaza Cheltenham Road and the Savoy at Shirehampton. He formerly controlled the Triangle at Bristol, the Whiteladies at Bristol and the Beau Nash in Westgate Street, Bath, which he sold some years ago to the Associated British Cinemas Ltd."

Mr Harris felt Oldfield Park would benefit from a large swimming pool with tea grounds and offered to lease the land at the rear of the cinema for the purpose. With the pool covered over dances could also take place. It seems that the Corporation didn't share Mr Harris's vision for Oldfield Park to cash in on the health and beauty fad of the 1930s as the scheme never got off the ground.

On Saturday 25 April 1942, *Pimpernel Smith* ("a great drama of Nazi Germany" starring Leslie Howard & Mary Morris) supported by The Three Stooges in *The Cuckoo Cavaliers* finished its run for the week. The film due to show from Sunday 26 April was *Lucky Partners*, starring Ronald Coleman and Ginger Rogers, supported by William Boyd in *Stagecoach War*. Ginger Rogers never made it on to the Scala's screen, as at 4:35am on the morning of Sunday 26 April the Luftwaffe launched the second raid on Bath, following the previous night's destruction. The cinema suffered damage, severe enough to close it, when a bomb scored a direct hit on an air raid shelter opposite, killing all the occupants. The cinema was still closed in November and the *Chronicle & Herald* ran a report on the matter, indicating the difficulty of getting non-essential building works approved during the war years.

"Why Scala Is Still Closed - reply awaited from Board of Trade." Following various letters that have appeared in our correspondence columns recently urging the reopening of the Scala Cinema, Oldfield Park, Bath, a *Chronicle and Herald* reporter made certain enquires on Friday afternoon.

First of all he sounded the opinion of residents in the district. All agreed that it was about time the cinema reopened, especially in view of the darker evenings. One Moorland Road resident remarked that if they came into the City they are frequently compelled to stand in queues and transport is difficult. Perhaps some people might suggest going to the cinema in the afternoon. "How can I?" she asked, "I do not finish work until 5-o'clock."

Emmanuel Harris, Chairman and Director of Harris Cinemas Ltd, took over the lease of the cinema on 11 September 1933. He had previously owned the Beau Nash in the City, as well as several cinemas in Bristol. Shortly after the name of the cinema was changed. The press block of 31 December 1935 carried the new name of the cinema - Scala - which it was to keep until it closed. There are no indications of any refurbishment works at this time but it was probably felt that the change of name would give the cinema an air of modernity.

In November 1936, the ever enterprising Mr Harris put forward a scheme to the Corporation to utilize some of the land surrounding the cinema. "Cinema Owner's Offer - New Swimming Bath for Corporation to Lease - Idea for Oldfield Park."

"Feeling that Oldfield Park,

Oldfield Picture House
OLDFIELD PARK, BATH
TO-DAY at 2.30, 6 and 8.15
SEE AND HEAR
BRANSBY WILLIAMS
as Grandfather Smallweed
from "BLEAK HOUSE"
Etc. Etc., Etc.

Also
May McAvoy in "The Little Snob"
(Silent Film)

THE ONLY
TALKIES
IN BATH.

Complete Change of Programme every Monday and Thursday.

Picturedrome
SOUTHGATE STREET, BATH.
Continuous Performance Daily,
2.30 till 10.30 p.m.
All Trams pass the Picturedrome.
MUSIC BY THE
"ELECTRAMONIC"
ORCHESTRA
Body of Hall, Ed. and Ed.
Grand Circle, 1/6 and 1/-
(including Tax).

To-morrow, Friday and Saturday:
ESTELLE BRODY & JOHN STUART
in
"Mademoiselle Parley-Voo"
(A clever sequel to "Mademoiselle from Armentieres.")
And Estelle Taylor & Antonio Moreno in
"The Whip Woman"
(A modern story of "cave-woman-love")

The Oldfield Picture House advertises 'the only talkies in Bath', whilst musical accompaniment is provided by the Electramonic Orchestra (an early record player) at the Picturedrome (Regal/Odeon).

Mr E Harris, the proprietor, said that he had made every effort to satisfy the requests of his patrons and could get the Scala in ship-shape condition in about a fortnight. The interior is quite alright, the auditorium needs putting in order and a new paybox would have to be erected. According to Mr Harris, the operator's box and machinery are in perfect order. It is true that the outer fabric of the Scala was severely damaged but this, it seems, would make no difference to the opening of this entertainment house. Mr Owens, the City Engineer, said that he has nothing to do with the matter. "The proprietor's architect," he explained, "has to make out an estimate of the damage and costs etc."

WH Watkins, who was architect of many of the cinemas in Bristol and who would go on to design the Forum in Southgate Street, was commissioned to complete repairs. The City surveyor was invited to inspect the site in a letter dated 30 June 1943. Work was due to be completed by Saturday 17 July 1943. The repairs took a little longer than anticipated, the grand reopening being advertised for 1 August 1943 at 2-o'clock.

"Scala Premier - Re-Open Tomorrow After Blitz Repairs. Residents of Oldfield Park who, since the blitz on Bath had been urging the reopening of the Scala Picture House, will have the opportunity of attending the premier in the reconstructed building tomorrow (Sunday) when the [1939 film *East Of Heaven*] starring Bing Crosby will be screening. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday Road to Morocco will be screened with full supporting programme. Mr E Harris, the proprietor, would like to take this opportunity of expressing thanks to Scala 'fans' and to the Bath Traders' Council for their untiring efforts to get the cinema in operation again."

On 28 September 1945, having moved on to build the Astoria Chippenham, Emanuel Harris transferred the lease to a Frank Dekin, of King Edward Road, the proprietors given as Messrs Becket & Plank. This lasted just about a year before again being transferred to Sydney Inkerman Daniels, of Devizes. On the documents, the name of a Leslie Columbine had been crossed out. Further documents state that he was considered unsuitable for the role after a letter from Rotherham West Riding Courts noted that he had been accused of falsifying wages and stealing £192.12s.3½d from Star Cinemas (London Ltd) whilst in their employment at a cinema in Maltby.

The license was again transferred in May 1947 to William Edward Holdam, who had been a manager at the Regal Denby, Empire Coventry and Capitol Hanley. By 1949, the seating capacity was given as 808. The license then transferred to Guthrie George Edward Plank on 29 July 1950. He held the license until 15 August 1952 when Lillian

Marion Moore, of Oldfield Park, took it on. She had previously been assistant manager-ess at the cinema, although Mr Plank was still involved with the cinema.

A letter dated 15 September 1951 in the Bath Archives sets out a proposal to alter the stalls toilets and the erection of a new island pay box, to be carried out by J Foster & Sons. The original entrances to the toilets from the foyer were to be bricked up and new entrances formed on the left and right of the rear stalls. A new cash desk was provided, erected in the middle of the foyer.

Mr Plank must have been in the mood to spend some cash on the business, as in a letter in the *Bath Chronicle* of 4 September 1954 he states that he had ordered a CinemaScope screen for the Scala, complete with stereophonic sound. This was in answer to letters of discontent from Bath cinemagoers who were asking why they could not see the new CinemaScope films in the city yet when the cinemas in nearby Chippenham [Astoria] were showing them.

A letter from John Ware, director of publicity Twentieth Century Fox, was published in the 20 December *Chronicle and Herald*. It announced, "I am happy to inform 'disgusted filmgoer' and other of your readers that Bath cinemagoers will be able to see CinemaScope when *The Robe*, the first film made in the new process, opens at the Scala Cinema on 3 January. In addition to the CinemaScope lens, the film will be shown with magnetic stereophonic sound, which is so much a part of the new technique."

3 January 1955 saw the unveiling of the new CinemaScope screen at a gala performance, with the first installation of full Stereophonic sound, as reported in the *Bath Chronicle*. "Scala Cinema Brings Off Double - CinemaScope with Full Stereophonic Sound. The Scala Cinema, (then the Oldfield Park Cinema), which was the first cinema to introduce 'talkies' to Bath brought off its double on Monday when it became the first local cinema to have CinemaScope with full stereophonic sound. The Forum Cinema, Bath, has shown CinemaScope films using the single sound track system and other local cinemas are to introduce the system shortly. The film chosen for the opening of full CinemaScope at the Scala Cinema was the 20th Century Fox Technicolor film *The Robe*, a gripping film dealing with the Crucifixion and the persecution of early Christians. The large screen gives the cameras remarkable scope, particularly in panoramic shots, where there is great clarity and depth of vision. But the chief merit of this system is the manner in which it brings the actors out of the screen as it were into the audience. Some of landscapes of Palestine and Rome are breathtaking.



The Scala as a Co-op in March 2006

To watch the film, the management of the cinema invited a large number of local residents. They included Alderman Major Adrian Hopkins, a former Mayor, the Chief Constable (Mr HP Hind), the Deputy Chief Constable (Supt Clifford Ford), the Medical Officer (Dr BA Astley Weston), Mr WE Hall (Chief of the Fire and Ambulance Service), Mr RW Steel (district manager of the SW Electricity Authority), Mr WA Sparrow (who was associated with the cinema when it was the Oldfield Park Cinema), Mr Aldridge Lyon, Councillor E Haskins and others who have played a prominent part in local affairs."

The Scala had once again beaten the Beau Nash, who presented *The High and the Mighty* fifteen days later on their new CinemaScope screen. Fitting the new screen would have been difficult at the Scala. The hall was of a basic design with the small stage located within the auditorium with the screen mounted on the back wall. There is mention, in passing, of alterations at this time in press reports but not what these were.

This new technical innovation was to last only eleven years, as the *Bath Weekly Chronicle & Herald* reported on Saturday 26 August 1961 "Bath Co-Op may buy the Scala Cinema". The report noted "The Society is also negotiating to buy land at the back of the cinema and Viner's Bakery on the corner of Arlington Road and Livingstone Road. As yet the Society has no detailed plans for the use of the building but the spokesman said, "It will certainly be used for a development of our retail services - a development which will be in the interests of our members and which will use the most advanced selling techniques. The site will provide car parking space for several hundred cars with access from Shaftesbury Road and Arlington Road."

The *Bath Chronicle and Herald* of Saturday 4 October 1961 announced: "Bath will be losing a Cinema this Sunday. The Scala Cinema - then the Oldfield Park Cinema - was the first cinema to introduce 'talkies' to Bath and then became the first local cinema to have CinemaScope with full stereophonic sound. This Sunday it will create a third but much sadder record, for it will become the first cinema in Bath to close since the war. Its last programme, showing on Sunday only, will be *Fortune is a Woman*, starring Jack Hawkins and Arlene Dahl and *Cell 2455 Death Row*, the film version of Caryl Chessman's best-selling novel."

The new store, with extensions to the rear, was three times the size of the existing building and utilised the cinema's original entrance on Shaftesbury Road, as well as a new entrance in Arlington Road. The building is still in use as the Co-op store, although the turquoise neon Scala name sign that was mounted at the top of the central entrance that lingered on for over twenty years after the cinema closed has now been removed. The site is still known as the Scala Store.

The final advert for the Scala

The World Speaks
TO YOUR
AUDIENCE
BY THE
MARCONIPHONE
THE WONDER OF THE AGE.

The Marconiphone is the receiver par excellence for broadcasted Wireless Telephony. It is the greatest stimulus to business that has ever been offered to the Entertainment World.

The Marconi Company install and maintain the Marconiphone in perfect working condition.

YOU HAVE
THE MARCONIPHONE PATENTS AT THE BACK OF YOU AND NO WORRY ABOUT INFRINGEMENT OF PATENTS.

SOLE AGENTS FOR GREAT BRITAIN FOR THEATRES, MUSIC HALLS, CINEMAS AND ALL PLACES OF PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT
The WALTURDAW Co., Ltd.,
46, GERRARD STREET, LONDON, W.1.
BRANCHES: Cardiff, Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

ERNEMANN IMPERATOR
CASH OR HIRE
PURCHASE

NUMBER in USE
NOW EXCEEDS
16,000

ERNEMANN MIRROR ARC LAMPS ALL TYPES.

ALL MODELS OF ERNEMANN MACHINES & OTHER ACCESSORIES KEPT IN STOCK.
FIRE PREVENTION DEVICES.
BUY THE GENUINE ARTICLE.

Sole Agents—
WALTURDAW CINEMA SUPPLY CO. LTD.
(E. G. TURNER, Managing Director.)
46, Gerrard St., London, W.1.
Telephone: 2531

Early in 1924 film-renting hit difficulties, ceasing at least until October. In July 1925 the Walturdaw Co Ltd went into receivership. The film-renting ended, the remainder became the Walturdaw Cinema Supply Co Ltd, still at 46 Gerrard Street with Edward Turner still managing director. The new company, with additional branches in Glasgow, Leeds and Manchester, had two adverts for projectors in the KYB 1927: one for the £87.10s 'Power Machine'; the other for the Ernemann Imperator, made by Ernemann-Krupp Kinoapparate, for which Walturdaw was 'sole agent'. In the KYB 1928 it advertised only Ernemann: the Imperator and the Imperator-II; and an article mentioned the space-saving Double Imperator, with left- and right-hand-

threading machines on the one base. *The Observer & West Sussex Recorder* of 22 February 1928 illustrated the costs. When Bognor Regis's Bands & Entertainment Committee received Walturdaw's £365. 19s. 6d 'estimate for a complete cinematograph installation' (excluding wiring, building work, making good, etc) at the Pavilion, the idea was dropped. Later, the British Legion hired both the hall and the 'Walturdaw Cinema Co' to show *Remembrance* with vocalist and orchestra on Sunday 11 November, the tenth anniversary of the Armistice.

Twelve days later the Committee reconsidered February's decision, favouring rear-projection with Walturdaw silent-film equipment. They estimated £390 for the latter, plus £100 for an operating box big enough for future sound equipment. The full Council killed the idea in December.

In December 1930 Edward Turner left to run the Patent Fireproof Rear Projection Screen Co Ltd and the Perforated Front Projection Screen Co Ltd. The business address and phone numbers were the same as the Superlite Cinema Screen Co Ltd, which also supplied 'stage equipment' and 'curtains and pelmets'.

With 'Walturdaw the House of Cinema Knowledge' on its cover, the 1930s catalogue promised 'Everything for the Cinema, Ballroom and Theatre'. ('Webbing Equipment' for carrying cans of nitrate film [R] stands out.) For example: Walturdaw supplied projectors for Southsea's Plaza (September 1928, three Ernemann-II), Crawley's re-opened Imperial Cinema (July 1929, Ernemann-II), Hammersmith's Commodore (September 1929), London's Dominion (October 1929), Clapham Junction's re-opened Grand (February 1931, Ernemann-II), Didsbury's Capitol (May 1931) Sneinton's Dale (December 1932), Fareham's Savoy (December 1933), Yarmouth's Regal (January 1934), the repurposed London Pavilion (September 1934),



Dundee's Green's Playhouse (March 1937) and Boston's Regal (May 1937, Ernemann). Replacing Power projectors installed by Walturdaw in August 1925, Ernemann-IIs with Naturetone, a British disc and sound-on-film system, went into Stoll's London Hippodrome; debuting to the trade on 9 August 1929. *The Era* considered Naturetone sibilant and tinny but 'cheap' at £295 to £1,140. Around 1928 a problematic rear-projection screen was replaced at London's Kennington Theatre. Non-projection items went into Motherwell's New Cinema (March 1935) and Armadale's Regal (December 1937); and 'furnishings' into Golders Green's revamped Ionic (December 1923). There were arc lamps for London's New Gallery Kinema (June 1925) and Whalley Range's West End (December 1930). At Prestwich's Astoria (September 1931) the large contract included a 'box'-controlled 21ft to 34ft expanding Magnascope screen plus Ernemann-IIs with Taylor Hobson variable focal-length lenses. Not all were Ernemann: Formby's Embassy (April 1932) got Power's projectors with Goerz arcs. Walturdaw's projection installation in Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall (June 1939), included a 7½ ton Academy-ratio rising-screen with pelmet and tabs. The last working example, it can still ascend through the concert platform [R].



The KYB 1944 reported Walturdaw's business had adapted 'to war needs'. The company's wartime KYB advert, headed 'Supply and Demand', assured exhibitors that it held large stocks of all items to meet their needs. The KYB mentioned the company's efforts in getting damaged cinemas running again where possible. The 1942 edition mentioned that air-raid precautions required interior glass fittings to be removed from cinemas: Walturdaw was one of a few named companies supplying non-glass replacements.

IN A GIVEN SPHERE one product is product No. 1... In the Cinema Industry this is without question the Walturdaw "V." The complete sound and vision projector which qualifies for first place on every count.

Branches at:
Birmingham
Leeds
Liverpool
Manchester
Newcastle-on-Tyne
Cardiff
Dublin
Glasgow

WALTURDAW
CINEMA SUPPLY CO., LTD.
46 GERRARD ST., LONDON, W.1. Tel.: GERRARD 1067

The 'new' Walturdaw 'Five', with a water-cooled gate, was advertised in the KYB 1946. Manufactured by Ernest F Moy Ltd of Bayham Street Camden Town, cinematography-engineers since 1895, it cloned the mid-1930s Ernemann V with improvements to the racking and Maltese-Cross mechanisms and its parts were interchangeable with Ernemann's. Unlike the new BTH-SUPA and the GK-21, it was an 'open' design. 'Five' became 'V' by the KYB 1948, perhaps because a Belgian agency sold it in Western Europe as the 'Cinq'. From the late 1940s the KYBs listed Walturdaw sound systems. The maximum was seven cinemas in the 1954 edition. Woodhall Spa's Kinema in the Woods was one.

The Walturdaw Cinema Supply Co Ltd went into liquidation in October 1951. In March 1952 there was a four-day auction of 'cinema and theatre accessories'; '2,000 yards of carpet'; '5,000 yards of upholstery fabric'; 'seats and accessories'; 'cinematographic equipment and parts'; 'electrical equipment and motors'; office and business equipment; and an 'Austin lorry'. Walturdaw Cinema Supplies (1952) Ltd, with one director from the predecessor, operated from 22 High Street, Kingston upon Thames. It advertised the 'V' projector in the KYB 1957 and in the 1960s was an acknowledged specialist in back-projection for film production. In 1969 it supplied double-band Ernemann-IX 35 mm and Zeiss Ikon Favorit-16B 16 mm projectors for ATV's new Birmingham studios, now demolished. The fate of Walturdaw Cinema Supplies (1952) Ltd is elusive. In October 2012 a 'film processing' business registered in Norwich as Walturdaw Ltd; it dissolved in April 2015.

MARGATE

By Wilf Watters



The former Plaza Margate

This time I am visiting Margate on the Kent Coast. It's receiving more visitors due to the Turner Gallery and the Fun Fair. The main shopping street is rather run down and half the shops are empty. At the top of it is a little gem, the Plaza. Little altered since it opened, it is a typical cinema of the period. It had 400 seats and cost 1/6 to 3/2; it still seems to be operating in 1950, according to the BKS annual report. Today it is run as a church by the Salvation Army and 'drop-in' sessions are available on Tuesday.



The exterior and interior of the Theatre Royal Margate

The old town part of Margate is attracting many visitors and in it is the Music Hall, which claims to be the second oldest in the country. Now called the Theatre Royal, it has shows, which keep the finance going. I visited it on an Open Day. I understand that it did show films and even managed back-projection for a while but this was a very short period.

The town did have several cinemas in the past but one of them was bombed, the Regal [R]. This had a very short life of seven years, as in September 1941 it was destroyed in an air raid.



The Classic Margate, formerly the Parade



The former Classic/Parade Margate, now an indoor market



Posters for the Parade [L] and Dreamland [R]



The interior of the former Parade Margate, now a market



The Dreamland Margate

But the reason for this article is the fact that a cinema on the front opposite the Turner Gallery has been re-opened as a Mini-Market, as the photos show. It was called the **Parade** and is first reported as operating in 1911. Later it became a **Classic** with 572 seats. Then it opened as a nightclub. After several years it has become an interesting place to visit. It has little shops and even a double decker bus for eating in. They tell me that the top had to be removed to get it in the building. In a little bar a poster of when it was the **Parade** can be seen. Talking of posters, at the still-sleeping **Dreamland** cinema someone has found a poster dating from film days; it's behind a dirty window but at least someone cares.

Thanks to CTA archive for b/w photos and Margate Town Museum.

THE GAUMONT PALACE BARNSTAPLE

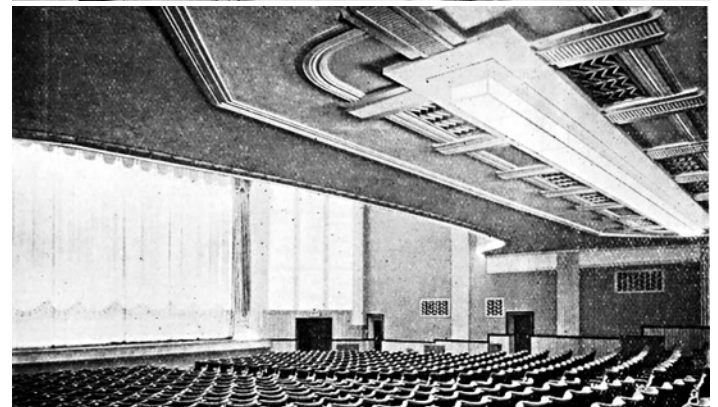
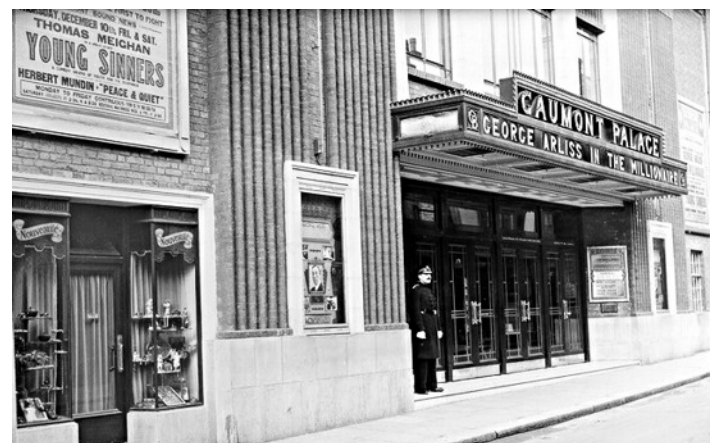
By David A Ellis

The Gaumont Palace Barnstaple was one of many cinemas springing up in 1931. It was run by Albany Ward, part of Gaumont British, in a joint venture with PCT. The 1930s was a time when cinema construction was prolific in the UK. The cinema was built on the site of the Theatre Royal and was designed by William Henry Watkins, assisted by Percy Bartlett. The building opened on 3 August 1931 at 2:30 and seated 702 in the stalls and 422 in the balcony. The opening attraction was *Whoopee* starring Eddie Cantor. The mayor, a Mr JT Dunn JP, performed the opening. Circuit supervisor for the area James L Saunders spoke from the stage and thanked the audience for attending in such large numbers.

The *North Devon Journal* dated 30 July 1931 says: "The main vestibule in Boutport Street is paved in white and buff terrazzo laid to a rectangular design. The walls are panelled in Columbian pine, stained green." The colour scheme was primarily a warm honey gold, picked out with tones of rich reds and greens. The proscenium was rectangular, forty feet by twenty-six feet. In 1937, as with other Gaumont cinemas the Palace bit was dropped and it became just Gaumont. Projectors would have been the Gaumont Eclipse, later changing to Kalee 21 machines with Duosonic sound or Magnus projectors.

TIMES OF PERFORMANCES			
MON to FRI - CONTINUOUS from 6 to 10.30			
SAT - BANK HOLIDAYS at 2.30, 6 & 8.30 (PATRONS WED - FRI - SAT) 2 HOURS AT 2-30			
Prices of Admission (INCLUDING TAX)			
FRONT BALCONY	2/-	CHILD - 1/-	
BACK BALCONY & STALLS	1/6	CHILD - 9d	
CENTRE STALLS	1/-	CHILD - 6d	
FRONT STALLS	6d	CHILD - 4d	(PATRONS ONLY)

From 21 October 1962 it became the Odeon. In 1967 the Classic chain took over. They split the week into films and bingo. Twinning eventually took place and it was eyes-down full-time in the former stalls area. The circle area was home to film. Classic left and it was taken over by independent operator and became the Astor, seating 360. After a while bingo ceased. Another takeover came in the mid-nineties when Scott Cinemas took control and it became the Central. They built three cinemas in the stalls area.



The Gaumont Palace Barnstaple in 1931

REWINDING BACK

Sent in by David A Ellis

GOSSIP

The Bishop of London now says that the Church must have its cinema. But it must be a cinema that neither opens on Sundays nor shows films that inflame and excite the minds of the young. *With Captain Scott in the Antarctic* is the type of film he desires to see more generally shown.

The Era – Wednesday 16 October 1916

SINGING IN LEEDS CINEMAS

At a meeting of Leeds Watch Committee yesterday it was decided to grant, as a temporary measure, certain concessions in regard to vocal music in cinemas. Singing in cinemas will be permitted without restriction, provided it is from the stage only and that no character or comic costume is worn and no objection is raised to the occasional singing of members of the orchestra to appropriate films. Hitherto, individual applications have been necessary for permission to have vocal music in Leeds cinema but provided this recommendation is approved by the City Council, permission will now be general. It had been the intention of the Watch Committee to revise the local rules and regulations respecting cinemas but in view of the comprehensive amendments from the Home Office to the statutory regulations governing theatres and cinemas, these will be considered at an early date.

Leeds Mercury – Saturday 22 September 1923

BURNLEY PALACE RUMOUR

A persistent rumour has been current during the last few days that the Burnley Palace Theatre was to become a 'talkie' cinema before the end of the year. We hear on good authority, however, that no such decision has been made by the new proprietors. Their future policy depends on the support given by the public. The bookings for the autumn include a succession of really first-class shows and, if they are given the support they deserve, the Palace will remain a Music Hall. But if revue, musical comedies and variety programmes are deserted, while the 'talkie' cinemas are full, the proprietors will naturally have to consider the possibility of giving the entertainment favoured by the public. Interest has been aroused by our exclusive intimation last Saturday that two Burnley cinemas were being leased to a syndicate; these cinemas are the Pentridge and the Alhambra. The Penridge is already wired with a good 'talkie' installation but the lessees intend to put in Western Electric apparatus and the Alhambra will be similarly equipped. Patrons will be glad to learn that no change in the management of either cinema is proposed.

Express and Advertiser – 26 July 1930

STAGE SHOWS AND CINEMAS

Mr Jeffrey Bernerd, Director and General Manager of W&F Film Service Ltd (a subsidiary of the Gaumont-British corporation) has been appointed to take control of the six big Gaumont-British theatres in the West End area – the Tivoli, New Gallery, Capitol, Astoria, Marble Arch Pavilion and the New Victoria. The super-presentation by Mr Bernerd of *The Ghost Train* at the Capitol theatre proved very much to the public's liking and packed houses at every performance has been the result. The directors of Gaumont-British wish it to be clearly understood that Mr Arthur Jarratt will still have the sole booking of the pictures for the West End of London. We understand that the West End houses that are not equipped with adequate stage accommodation suitable for the spectacular presentations proposed are to be brought into line at once.

The Era – 14 October 1931

CINEMA STRIKE – BURNLEY NOT AFFECTED

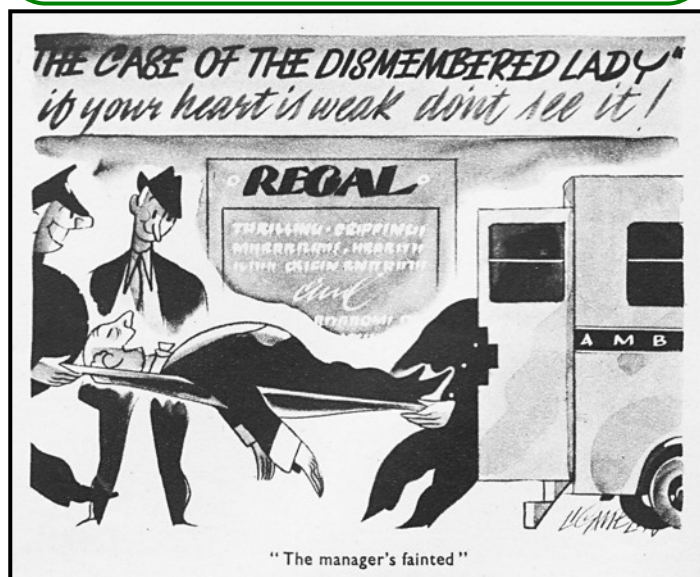
It is very unlikely that the strike of cinema operators will affect Burnley and, though the dispute spread to the Manchester area last Monday, Burnley cinemas remained open as usual. Last Monday, operators who are members of the Electrical Trades Union held a meeting at Burnley, after which it was decided to remain at work that day and there have been no further developments since. A local cinema manager told a *Burnley Express* reporter last night that he had every reason to believe that the Burnley operators would not strike. Practically the whole of the cinemas in Burnley were paying the agreed rates and working a 48-hour week and there would be little to gain if the union officials called out the whole of the operators in the town.

Burnley Express – Wednesday 20 April 1938

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [mentmore.webplus.net/page27.html] A page on Portsmouth cinemas and theatres with many pictures.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y7u558lf] A page from the *Bradford Telegraph & Argus* about Michael Portillo's visit to the New Victoria / Odeon in Bradford. The programme was broadcast on Channel 5 on 30 November and may still be available on catch-up. Projectors were provided by our friends in the PPT.
- ★ [youtu.be/IPnf_iv4bZk] Is IMAX worth it? A US video on the various types of IMAX. Includes links to similar videos.
- ★ [norfolkatthepictures.org.uk] Norfolk's Cinemas.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y87q5fm8] & [tinyurl.com/yayleguv] Urban explorers visit the abandoned Crescent cinema Pontefract.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y7ylc5dw] Portraits of Liverpool cinemas.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ycmdtxsj] A *Press & Journal* page on the cinemas of Aberdeen with 15 photos.
- ★ [youtu.be/fTyFntLwBh4] & [youtu.be/l8pYPgYGEUs] & [youtu.be/wPNSvliJkKw] A video of the Odeon Aberdeen in 2000 in three 7-minute parts. *Above five items sent in by Gavin McGrath*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y8yfnuc8] A page from the *East Anglian Daily Times* on the Leiston Film Theatre *sent in by Terry Hanstock*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yboj95ja] A *Time Out* page – Behind the scenes at the London Cinema Museum. *Sent in by Tom Laughlan*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ycpg3l6e] An *Essex Live* page on what the State Grays will look like when turned into a Wetherspoons pub. Also has a history of the cinema and some vintage photos.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y8qtqh7g] A *Yorkshire Life* page on Graham Denison, a volunteer projectionist at the Ritz Thirsk.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yb3ojwjl] A *Times of India* article on the many art deco cinemas that are disappearing. *Sent in by Bob Bradshaw*

CARTOON CORNER



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

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

FOR SALE *Film Review* January 1995 to December 1997, 36 issues. *Flicks* October 1988 to December 1995, 87 issues. All VGC. Offers to Gavin McGrath 07493 005780

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]

ABINGDON (Oxon)

A new cinema in the Abbey Hall at the Guildhall was due to open before Christmas. It will be run by the Wiper family, who operate the Regal at Evesham. Work has included installing a nine-metre projection screen, acoustic wall coverings and advanced Dolby 7.1 surround sound. Traditional cinema seating will be found in rows up in the circle, while the stalls will offer cabaret-style seating. A brand new professional kitchen and renovated bar will mean people can also enjoy light meals and drinks while watching a film.

Oxford Mail – 31 October, 8 December; Wantage & Grove Herald – 7 November

ALTRINCHAM (Greater Manchester)

A new Everyman cinema opened on 9 November in George Street. The capacities of the four screens are 80, 42, 71 & 54. All have Sony 4k digital projection and Dolby 7.1 digital sound whilst screen ③ is equipped for Real 3D. {58804}

Sale & Altrincham Messenger – 8 November

ASHFORD (Kent)



The new six-screen Picturehouse opened in Eldwick Place on 15 December. It is the first Picturehouse to be purpose-built and the first to have a laser projector. Screen sizes vary from 72 seats to 229. The managerial staff are in a see-through office under screen ①. {58936}

Kent Online – 29 November; sent in by Philip Stevens & Martin Tapsell [photo]

BALA (Gwynedd)



The Council-owned Neuadd Buddug was due to close at the end of December, with the loss of five jobs. In 2016 a protracted campaign saved the cinema from closure and installed £50,000 of new technology. Despite making the venue accessible to all and refurbishing elements of the 120-year-old structure, the Council will now abandon the building. The projection equipment will be moved to the new Ysgol y Berwyn's new superschool.

Cambrian News – 6 December; photo taken June 2011

BASINGSTOKE (Hants)

A planning application has been submitted to overhaul the Chineham District Centre, which was built in the 1980s. The proposals include a three or four-screen 'boutique' cinema. A decision is expected in March.

Basingstoke Gazette – 5 December

BLACKBURN (Lancs)



The former New Central Hall has been sold for £139,000 at auction, £14,000 above the guide price. The building opened in 1900 as a roller skating rink and was converted into a cinema in 1909. It closed in January 1957 and later became bingo and then a snooker club. It is not known what the new owner proposes to do with the venue. {35000}

Lancashire Telegraph – 19 November; sent in by Philip Crompton; photo taken June 2005

BLAENAU FFESTINIOG (Gwynedd)

The Cellb cinema in the former Police Station was threatened with closure after an insurance claim to repair storm damage to the building was rejected. However a crowdfunding campaign has raised £10,000 to keep the venue open. It opened in July 2016. {55414}

North Wales Live – 10 December

BLAENAVON (Torafen)

The Workmen's Hall Cinema has had 70 wider, softer, fabric seats installed. Half the £20,000 was funded by the Town Council. A new digital projector was installed two years ago. {26560}

South Wales Argus – 19 October

BRADFORD (West Yorks)

Lord Mawson, who was born in Bradford, has been appointed patron of Bradford Live, the ambitious project to reopen the former New Victoria / Odeon as a 4,000-seat performance venue. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has provided a grant of £4m to support the project, which is due to be completed in 2020. A planning application has now been submitted; work is due to start in the summer. {3677}

Yorkshire Post – 16 October, 6 December

BRIDLINGTON (North Yorks)



The former Roxy has been listed Grade II. You can download the report at [tinyurl.com/ybub67q6]. It opened in 1912, a conversion of a former Temperance Hall. It closed about 1961/2 and is now an amusement arcade. {3223}

Sent in by Richard Gray; photo taken June 2006

BRIGHTON

Patrons have complained about being cold in the Odeon. A spokesman said a boiler had broken down and engineers were fixing it. The cinema offered refunds or free passes to anyone affected by the incident.

The Stage – 1 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

BRISTOL

The technical team at the Watershed cinema has been named the best in the UK at the National Cinema Technology Awards in London. With the rise of automation, it is one of the few cinemas left in the country with a full projection team; it retains its 35mm equipment.

Bristol Live – 30 November

BURNLEY (Lancs)



Campaigners have bought the Grade II listed derelict Empire Theatre from the Duchy of Lancaster for just £1. It opened in October 1894 with 1,500 seats on three levels. It saw mixed theatre and film use until 1970, before becoming a bingo club. That closed in 1995 and the building has been unused since; the stalls area was damaged by an arson attack last October. In June the local authority approved plans for a café bar in the entrance hall, which appeared to be making progress in August. Design guru Wayne Hemingway has joined the campaign. {36755}

Daily Express – 8 December; *The Stage* – 20 October, 13 December; photo courtesy ROB sent in by Philip Crompton, Gavin McGrath, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

BURTON UPON TRENT (Staffs)

The buffet restaurant of the Grade II listed former Ritz/Robins opened as a cat café just before Christmas [www.purrociuous.co.uk]. The majority of the building is in use as a nightclub. {22126}

Derbyshire Live – 30 November; also sent in by Martin Tapsell

CAEMES BAY (Anglesey / Ynys Môn)

Plans have been approved for a £2m development including a restaurant, a 72-seat cinema and a permanent home for the local lifeboat. An 1856 chapel will be converted, retaining as much as possible of the original. No time scale has been given.

North Wales Live – 21 November

CHORLEY (Lancs)

Work has started on the Market Walk development that will incorporate a new six-screen Reel cinema.

Preston Pulse – 1 October

COLCHESTER (Essex)

There has been another fire at the former Odeon in Crouch Street. The cause of the fire is unknown and an investigation will take place. The cinema opened in February 1931 and closed in October 2002. Permission exists to convert the front of the building into apartments and demolish the auditorium and build more apartments. {17575}

Essex County Standard – 26 November

DAVENTRY (Northants)

Councillors have agreed to increase the money they are spending on a new cinema after costs spiraled from £8.2m to £12.3m. The expense of moving the library from its current location – where the cinema would be built – has also increased from £700,000 to £1.5m.

Daventry Express – 7 December

DEAL (Kent)



Dover District Council has offered the Astor Community Theatre (1906) £3,500 to help with setting up the Astor Picturehouse, providing Deal Town Council does the same, as they have the funds in their capital budget. The theatre is very busy and cannot afford a digital projector but would offer Monday screenings of recent films in Blu-ray and DVD format. The theatre director would spend £4,000 on a screen and £3,000 on 150 seats imported from China. {32926}

Sent in by Martin Tapsell; photo taken April 2008; see also p33

DERBY

The Council has said it has no plans to buy the former Hippodrome, despite purchasing other key buildings in the area. The Council has talked to the Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust in the past and supports the regeneration of the Grade II listed building. It was badly damaged during works ten years ago. {14683}

Derby Telegraph – 26 November; sent in by Paul Chadwick & Peter Good

DEVIZES (Wilts)



The Palace cinema has been sold by long-time owner John Angel. Bognor-based Picturedrome, owned by Adam Cunard, will take over in January. The cinema will close for a few weeks to allow the first phase of work, including new seating and a new screen. The bingo hall underneath the cinema will close and eventually this will become an additional screen. Mr Cunard expects to spend about £2m over the next few years on the project. The name and historic features will be retained. The building opened in 1912 and was twinned in 1975 with a 253-seat cinema in the former circle and bingo in the stalls. {24666}

Gazette & Herald – 7 December; sent in by David Reeves; photo taken August 2003

David Reeves writes: I remember when I worked there under the Robins regime they wanted to convert the existing cinema in the old balcony into a two-screen operation but the issues with space and what they would end up with – two very small cinemas – meant the scheme was abandoned. The old bingo hall is very large but narrow with a deep stage area (it was used for live shows over the years) so it will be interesting to see what the plans are.



DUDLEY

The Hippodrome could be turned into a £9m hub for driverless vehicles after the Council granted planning permission. The Theatres Trust is encouraging campaigners to continue their fight to save the theatre.

*Express & Star – 6 December; The Stage – 6, 13 December;
sent in by Ivan Harris, Allan Pointon, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson*

DUNDEE

Plans to build an eight-screen Light cinema at the Wellgate have been dropped after talks collapsed. The cinema chain is now in early discussions over an alternative site within the City.

Evening Telegraph, Dundee – 5 December

DURHAM

Construction work on Milburngate is set to begin in January after an updated planning application was granted approval. The project includes a new three-screen 384-seat Everyman cinema.

Insider Media – 7 December

EASTBOURNE (East Sussex)



The Council has approved two planning applications, which are expected to see the six-screen Cineworld at Sovereign Harbour Retail Park stripped out and transformed into shops. It opened in August 1990 as the Cannon and was rebranded MGM, Virgin and UGC before becoming the Cineworld in November 2005. The cinema will relocate into the refitted Arndale Centre in 2019. {24982}

The Argus, Brighton – 22 November; sent in by Barry Quinton; photo taken April 2008

EASTLEIGH (Hants)



The Point has been awarded £367,800 from Arts Council England. Amongst the improvements, the dressing rooms and toilets will be refurbished and a hearing loop will be installed.

Daily Echo, Southampton – 31 October; sent in by Ian Patterson; photo taken March 2009

EDINBURGH

Major plans have been announced for the redevelopment of the King's Theatre. The City Council has pledged £4m towards the project. Lifts and ramps will be installed to improve disabled access. The stage will be flattened to attract world-class opera and dance and the orchestra pit rebuilt. Essential repairs will be made to lighting, wiring and the safety curtain to make them fit for purpose and back of house facilities will be given a facelift. Work is scheduled to begin in September 2021 with the theatre closed for 20 months, reopening in summer 2023. {41761} [tinyurl.com/ydhp5kvz]

Edinburgh Reporter – 7 November

GRIMSBY (Lincs)

Yet more doubt has been cast on the £18m Riverhead Square development, which was to include a nine-screen Cineworld. Construction was due to commence last October but there is still no sign of work on site.

Grimsby Live – 15 December

HARTLEPOOL



The bingo operation in the former Regal/Essoldo ceased on 6 November. Gaming machines were stripped out of the building. There is no news on what will become of the venue. {20107}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken September 2006

HUDDERSFIELD (West Yorks)

The owners of the Kirkgate Shopping Centre have applied for permission to turn the top level into a cinema. The floor used to accommodate the House of Fraser store, which has gone into administration.

Huddersfield Examiner – 1 November

HULL (East Yorks)

The campaign to turn the Grade II listed former National Picture Theatre into a memorial to the Blitz has been awarded a grant of £11,200 from the Heritage Lottery Fund [HLF] to progress with its plans. Grant applications are assessed over two rounds and if the detailed proposals are passed, the project would be granted £288,900.

BBC News Humberside website – 13 December

The nightclub in the former Tower has a new owner and its name is being changed to The Tower. The new company will gradually refurbish the venue and bring in new acts. The cinema opened in June 1914 and films ceased in September 1978. {3278}

Hull Live – 12 November; sent in by David Alexander

KINGS LYNN (Norfolk)

Councillors are exploring the possibility of converting a seldom-used bar and foyer area of the listed Corn Exchange into a one-screen 112-seat or a two-screen cinema with 60 seats each. The project, which could cost £1m has the support of the operator of the town's Majestic cinema.

Lynn News – 30 October, 9 November

LEEDS (West Yorks)

The former Odeon inside the Merrion Centre is up for rent. It opened in August 1964 as a 70mm roadshow cinema and closed in October 1977. The projectors and seats have been removed but much of the cinema is still there, the entrance hidden behind Yorkshire Bank cash machines. A plan in 2014 to turn it into a trampoline park came to naught. Now it is advertised as 'available to rent' with a 'wide range of prospective uses'. However, a later report says that permission is being sought to demolish part of the centre – including the cinema – and replace it with a 17-storey tower! {3151}

Yorkshire Evening Post – 28 November, 3 December

LEICESTER

Plans have been formally submitted for a £7m expansion of the three-screen Phoenix. There will be two new 70-seat cinemas, a new bar and open-air terrace. A grant of £4.1m has already been secured from the Arts Council and Leicester City Council will also provide £1m. Since the cinema moved to the Cultural Quarter nine years ago, it has more than doubled its audiences. If planning approval is granted, construction would start in late 2019 and be completed towards the end of 2020. {35252}

Insider Media – 30 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock

LINCOLN

By the time you read this demolition work should have commenced in the Cornhill Quarter, prior to the building of a new three-screen Everyman cinema. The scheme will be handed over in November for fitting out so opening will be in early 2020.

Lincolnshire Live – 12 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock

LONDON (Acton)

The Grade II listed former Granada has still not opened as a climbing centre although men have been working inside for months. The front has been cleaned up and painted. {13831}

Sent in by Malcolm Gambles

LONDON (Alexandra Palace)



The east wing at Alexandra Palace reopened on 1 December after a six-year £27m renovation. The project includes the Grade II listed 850-seat theatre. The design of the theatre is supposed to be 'arrested decay' to maintain an authentic appearance of what it would have looked like if it had continued to be used, with paint peeling off the walls and original signage. It had been used as a BBC scenery store until the 1980s, since when it had been disused. In the run-up to Christmas, films due to be screened included *Elf* and *Love Actually*. Ticket prices for the screenings, operated by Luna Cinema, were £17.50. [tinyurl.com/y797phu2] {44961}

Daily Mail – 30 November; also sent in by Tom Laughlan; photo by Gavin McGrath

LONDON (Barking)

The Council has given the go-ahead for a new two-screen cinema. It will be run by Arthouse, who already have a site in Crouch End. It will be the first cinema in the Borough since the three-screen Odeon closed in 1998 and was demolished in 2001.

Evening Standard – 21 November; sent in by Mike Collins & Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Bromley)

The Mayor of Bromley officially opened the new 672-seat nine-screen Vue in St Mark's Square on 28 November. Seating capacities in the screens range from 183 down to 30. All auditoria have recliner seats and 4k digital projection. {58221}

News Shopper – 1 December; sent in by Philip Stevens & Martin Tapsell

LONDON (Croydon)

The reopening of the Fairfield Halls following a £30m refurbishment has been put back until September. It closed for the works in July 2016. The 1,552-seat concert hall is being revamped. {29122}

The Stage – 1 November; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

LONDON (Crystal Palace)

The new four-screen Everyman opened on 14 November in the former Rialto/Granada. It has Dolby surround sound, 4k projection and comfy sofa seats. The CTA is due to visit in February – see Events p3.

Time Out – 6 November; sent in by Gavin McGrath, Tom Laughlan & R David Simpson

LONDON (East Finchley)

The charity that runs the Phoenix has dropped its proposals to hand control to Curzon Cinema. Thousands of people protested over the plans in a campaign joined by the likes of Mike Leigh, Michael Palin and Ken Loach. They said that the cinema would lose its "unique identity" if it were taken over. The trustees have appealed for audiences to return after it was revealed the cinema needs to raise £50,000 by the end of March. {14814}

*Evening Standard – 1, 6, 26 November;
sent in by Terry Hanstock, Tom Laughlan, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson*

LONDON (Elephant & Castle)

Permission has been granted for the redevelopment of the shopping centre. It includes a new 1,000-seat multi-screen cinema. Demolition is expected to get underway soon; it is believed the former ABC/Coronet will be bulldozed.

Construction Enquirer – 14 December

LONDON (Hackney)

The cinema at the Institute of Light closed on 27 September.

Sent in by Gavin McGrath

LONDON (Holloway)



Plans – described on p5 of the last Bulletin – to revamp the Odeon have been given the green light. Several conditions were attached to the approval, including that work must begin within three years. The façade and the foyer are Grade II Listed parts of the building. {4300}

Islington Tribune – 30 November; sent in by Tom Laughlan; photo taken September 2004

LONDON (Kentish Town)

Developers have confirmed they are reviving their plans for a cinema in the former Pizza Express building. They have teamed up with Arthouse, who operate a cinema in Crouch End, to press ahead with an 80-seat auditorium. See p31 Bulletin 52/3.

Camden New Journal – 15 November; sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Lewisham)

Plans for the redevelopment of the roundabout in front of Lewisham station have been revised to include a cinema. No further details have been given.

From the Murky Depths – 9 December

LONDON (Shepherd's Bush)

The former Pyke's Cinematograph Theatre has now been reduced to a shell. Plans to demolish the building for apartments were turned down by the local authority in June 2015.

Sent in by Gavin McGrath

LONDON (Sidcup)

The former Blockbuster building is to become a three-screen cinema. Architects have been appointed. Demolition will begin in the spring and a planning application submitted in the summer. Opening is scheduled for 2021.

Bexley Times – 22 November

LONDON (Stoke Newington)

Luna Cinema presented a series of Christmas films, including *Elf* and *Home Alone*, at the old Savoy Cinema, now Earth (Evolutionary Arts Hackney). Mulled wine and mince pies were on the menu and there's a full bar. The CTA is due to visit in March – see Events p4.

Hackney Today – 17 December; sent in by Gavin McGrath

LONDON (Streatham)

Campaigners staged a demonstration outside the Grade II listed Streatham Hill Theatre on 25 November against it being sold to developers. The 2,800 capacity theatre was recently listed as an Asset of Community Value [ACV] by the Council. The owners have appealed against the Council's decision, sparking fears they may have intentions to sell the property. It opened in November 1929 and had been used for bingo from 1962 but closed in January 2017. It is on the Theatres Trust 'at risk' register. {31611}

The Stage – 22 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

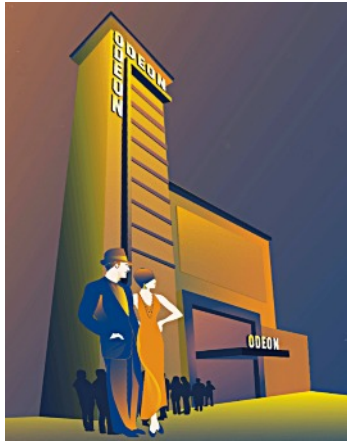
LONDON (Waterloo)

The Old Vic has launched a £100,000 public fundraising campaign to help it carry out major works, including doubling the number of female toilets. The foyer space will also be enlarged. {30783}

The Stage – 22 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

LONDON (West End)

The refurbished Odeon Leicester Square reopened on 21 December, rebranded as an Odeon Luxe. The opening film was *Mary Poppins Returns*. The cinema has been upgraded to Dolby Cinema specification with dual laser projectors. Heritage features such as the Compton organ and the 'flying ladies' have been restored. Huge amounts of asbestos were taken out, delaying the project. 70 tons of steelwork were inserted to make the building and ceilings stronger and to carry the weight of 410 Dolby Atmos speakers and 10 miles of cable.



The screen will be able to be moved backwards and forwards for live events. The screen curtains replicate the original from the 1930s. The painted safety curtain will be permanently fixed in the raised position; however a slide has been made of it that can be projected on the screen. The older projection equipment has been retained. The rear stalls seating area has been taken over by new toilets, a switch room and larger concession area. The former front stalls now has 259 recliner seats on nine rows. The front of the circle (Royal Circle) now has three rows of 90 recliner seats. The rear circle has 446 regular seats on fourteen rows. Total seating capacity has been reduced to 794 + 6 disabled spaces (reduced from 1,683 seats of recent years). Some photos at [tinyurl.com/yb2p43so]. The adjacent Odeon Mezzanine screens will be renamed Odeon Leicester Square ② - ⑤ and have a reduced seating capacity of 116 (from 290) losing one screen. {841} & {12777}

Evening Standard – 5, 6, 8 November; sent in by Alan Body, Don Brookes, Tom Laughlan, Allan Pointon, R David Simpson & John West; see Business p28



The Odeon around noon on 20 December; photo by Allen Eyles

Allen Eyles writes: The Odeon scheduled preview screenings, open to the public, in the main auditorium on Thursday 20 December of *Stan and Ollie* at 5:45 and *The Favourite* at 9pm. The entrance and foyer were still being finished by a horde of workmen on the Thursday morning. Quite like the 1930s when it was said many a cinema opened with the last lick of paint being applied at the back as the Mayor arrived at the front. On the south side of the Square, work is well advanced on the new hotel on the site of the former Leicester Square Theatre / Odeon West End with an artist's impression of the finished building showing a tower feature on the corner with a vertical Odeon sign for the new cinemas within. With the Odeon Luxe Haymarket (ex Odeon Panton Street) just a few steps away, the circuit will dominate the area.

Cameron Macintosh's proposed purchase of the Ambassadors Theatre has fallen through when the building's owners pulled out of the deal after receiving higher offers.

The Stage – 1 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

The owners of the Windmill Theatre have vowed to stay open, despite losing an appeal against Westminster Council's decision to revoke its licence. The venue was banned from providing adult entertainment after undercover detective hired by a women's rights group discovered dancers flouting the 'no touching' rules.

Evening Standard – 23 October; sent in by Tom Laughlan

The Dominion in Tottenham Court Road has applied for planning permission to remove the existing stage to install a palletised modern stage and associated alterations to the stage area. Also included are improved stage door facilities to include disabled access to back of house and conversion of a former cloakroom into a bar.

Camden New Journal – 8 November; sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (West Norwood)



The new Picturehouse opened on 9 November with four screens and 559 seats. Two of the screens are in the former Nettelfield Hall, which was used for films in the 1970s and 80s. The CTA is due to visit in February – see Events p3.

[spotlight.picturehouses.com/tag/west-norwood] {58805}

Evening Standard – 5 November; *Time Out* – 6 November; photo by Kevin Gooding also sent in by Mike Collins, Terry Hanstock, Gavin McGrath, Robert Holden & Tom Laughlan

MANCHESTER (Central)

Everyman has signed up to be the operator of a new three-screen cinema in Astley & Byrom House, which is currently undergoing a refit. Opening is scheduled for autumn 2019.

Manchester Evening News – 28 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

MARGATE (Kent)

The future of the Grade II* listed Theatre Royal is in jeopardy after a planned takeover by London's Soho Theatre collapsed. The venue is one of the Theatres Trust most 'at risk' venues. {25790}

The Stage – 11 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

NEWTON ABBOT (Devon)

Plans for the next phase of a £180m regeneration have been approved by Councillors. The project includes a new cinema within Market Walk. The existing cinema could become a performance centre. It is hoped the new cinema could be open by 2020.

Devon Live – 21 November

NORWICH

Plans have been approved for a £250m redevelopment of Anglia Square. A new cinema to replace the current Hollywood (ex Odeon) forms part of the scheme. {25214}

BBC News Norfolk website – 6 December

OLDHAM (Greater Manchester)

The Coliseum's plans for a £27m new home have been scrapped after the Council said it was "reviewing its work and costs". However the Council said it will work with the venue on new proposals over the coming months. The CTA visited last August – see p10. {14148}

The Stage – 15 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

PLYMOUTH

Everyman is to create a three-screen 'boutique' cinema in the Grade I listed Melville Building, which overlooks the Marina at the heart of Royal William Yard. No opening date has been given.

Plymouth Live – 13 December

PORTSMOUTH

A man was attacked and left unconscious at the fourteen-screen Vue in Gunwharf on Saturday 27 October during an afternoon screening of *Bohemian Rhapsody*. A fifteen-strong group of teenagers ran into several screens at a little after 1:30pm. After bursting into a showing of the Queen biopic and shouting obscenities in front of the screen they were confronted by a 49-year-old man who was on a day trip from Oxford with his family. The teenagers ruthlessly attacked the man, punching and kicking him in the head, body and face. He was left unconscious, badly bruised and with a fractured left shoulder. Two youths aged 13 and 14 years old were later arrested after CCTV footage was examined by police. {25249}



The News, BBC website, various tabloid newspapers 27-29 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth, Tom Laughlan, Barry Quinton & Mike Whitcombe [photo]

A power cut blacked out three separate areas of Portsmouth for several hours on Monday 19 November, including Gunwharf, a mainly designer-brand shopping and leisure centre, that is home to the 3,200-capacity Vue. The power cut hit at approximately 9pm. Patrons in the fourteen screens were left sitting in the dark for a quarter of an hour before staff asked them to gather in the foyer. They were then told to leave the building because of "health and safety concerns". No refunds were given as the cash registers were not working. Cinema customers, along with diners at the various restaurants and gamblers at the casino, then took up to an hour to exit the underground car parks.

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe

ROMNEY (Kent)

Plans for a new 60-seat cinema at the Marsh Academy look more likely after a grant of £80,000. It is believed all the money from various grants is now in to convert former changing rooms into the new screen to be called CineMarsh.

Kent Online – 31 October

SALISBURY (Wilts)

A new seven-screen cinema is being proposed as part of a redevelopment of The Maltings centre. The town already has a five-screen listed Odeon and there is concern that the City centre could not support two.

Salisbury Journal – 16 October

SCARBOROUGH (North Yorks)

The owners of the Grade II listed Stephen Joseph Theatre (ex Odeon) want to replace the neon signs on the front of the building. Vandalism and deterioration have left the building dark in recent years. The neon signs on the front will spell 'CINEMA' and 'THEATRE'.

Scarborough News – 27 November

The long-running saga over plans for a multiplex at North Bay has taken another twist. The originally scheduled opening date of 2018 was pushed back to 2019, then 2020. Now revised plans have been submitted that will keep the six cinema screens but reduce the size of the eateries and car park.

Scarborough News – 14 December

SHEFFIELD

A police hunt is underway for a man who attacked two teenage boys at the Cineworld. He is said to have confronted the boys when one of their mobile phones went off during the adverts. Back in September, a man died after a fight outside the cinema.

Sheffield Star – 20 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Terry Hanstock

SLOUGH

Slough Borough Council bought the Adelphi in August for £4.6m. It is considering several options for the theatre, currently on bingo – see Business p28.

Slough Express – 23 November; sent in by R David Simpson

SOUTHAMPTON

A mum who hit the headlines with her 'toilet selfies' was invited to perform the ceremonial 'first flush' on a toilet at the Mayflower Theatre (ex Gaumont) after inspiring the venue to splash out £17,000 on brand new facilities for disabled people. The Grade II listed theatre installed a Changing Places toilet as part of its major refurbishment, which was completed at the end of September. The facility has a hoist and an adult-size changing table. {6296}

Daily Echo, Southampton – 15 October; sent in by Ian Patterson

The Harbour Lights cinema celebrated British film by offering free seats on 30 September to anyone with a current Lottery ticket. The National Lottery says players have helped fund "thousands" of British film projects, including *The King's Speech*, *Suffragette*, *The Viceroy's House* and *Pride*. {6173}

Daily Echo, Southampton – 21 September; sent in by Ian Patterson

STAFFORD

The new £6.5m Odeon Luxe opened on 28 November. All six screens have luxury reclining seats. The iSense screen is 15m by 6.2m. The seating capacities are 137, 84, 48, 34, 60 & 60 – 423 in total.

Staffordshire Newsletter – 17 October; sent in by Chris Ingram & Allan Pointon

SWINDON (Wilts)

Plans have been approved for a £270m project on the North Star site, with a snow centre featuring two real-snow slopes. There will also be a twelve-screen Empire cinema with the largest IMAX screen in Europe. No time scale has been given.

Swindon Advertiser – 29 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock & Ivan Harris

TENTERDEN (Kent)

Doubt has been cast on the suitability of the Grade II listed Pebbles Building to house a proposed cinema. It appears that the scheme would involve replacing the entire stairs, complete removal of the chimney stack, all internal partitions, the first floor ceiling / second floor and the front steps; the listing only covers the "external features and façade".

Kent Online – 9 December; sent in by Philip Stevens

VERWOOD (Hants)

A new digital cinema opened at The Hub arts centre in Verwood, Dorset on 6 May. It has 304 seats and features a digital projection system with 7.1 surround sound. Films are shown on two days each month with two films on each day.

Bournemouth Daily Echo – 1 May; sent in by Gavin McGrath

WATFORD (Herts)

A new nine-screen 1,500-seat Cineworld opened on 14 December in a new extension to the INTU Shopping Centre. It has an IMAX 3D laser screen, which has 475 seats and a 270° ScreenX. {58946}

Watford Observer – 14 December; sent in by John Pilblad & Ken Roe

WILMSLOW (Cheshire)

Plans (reported on p27 of the last Bulletin) to bring the former Rex back to life have been approved by planners. The Mundin family has taken a 15-year lease on the Rex and aims to operate a two-screen cinema. Plans include reinstating the original balcony area. [www.rexcinemawilmslow.com]

Stockport Independent – 1 November

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or email membership@cinema-organs.org.uk

www.cinema-organs.org.uk



Plans have been put forward by the Council for a £6.6m upgrade of the Ambassadors cinema. The number of screens would increase from six to seven "high quality auditoria". The cinema currently has 1,485 seats but this would drop to 915 seats, despite the extra screen. The cinema opened in April 1993 and is currently dealing with a "rodent problem". {25859}

Surrey Live – 6 December; photo taken April 2006

WOLVERHAMPTON

The Grand Theatre has revealed plans to build a new 200-seat performance space. The new theatre will be on the site of a former Post Office next door.

The Stage – 18 October; sent in by R David Simpson

WORTHING (West Sussex)

The Council's preferred option for Union Place is to build 194 homes, commercial space and two modern cinema screens, adjoining the Connaught Theatre.

Worthing Herald – 1 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

LATE NEWS

BILLINGHAM (Teesside)



The former Picture House is up for sale at £600,000. It opened in December 1928 and films ceased in the late 1960s in favour of bingo. It was transformed in the 1980s into retail units and a pub. The pub closed last July and the building went on sale in August. {47055}

Teesside Live – 22 December; photo taken June 2006

TRURO (Cornwall)

When the CTA visited the Plaza in June 2013 it was mentioned that a fifth screen was to be added. It was never reported but it actually happened in 2016. {25776}

[wtwcinemas.co.uk/truro/cinema-details]; sent in by Tim McCullen

Other Events of Interest [not organised by the CTA]

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

THE PLAZA STOCKPORT

Friday 25 January *The Bookshop* (2017) [PG] 11am
A Matter of Life and Death (1946) [U] 7:30pm
 Saturday 2 February Organ Coffee Morning 10am admission free
Sing-a-long-a Sound of Music (1965) 7pm
 Friday 8 February *Bohemian Rhapsody* (2018) [15] 11am & 7:30pm
 Thursday 14 February *Brief Encounter* (1945) [PG] 7:30pm
 Friday 15 February *A Star is Born* (2018) [15] 11am & 7:30pm
 Behind the Scenes Tours at 11am on Mondays 28 January, 25 February & 18 March. £8. Book or simply turn up.
 Box Office: 0161 477 7779; website [www.stockportplaza.co.uk]

THE REGAL EXPERIENCE, WYMONDHAM

18 March Alfred Hitchcock's *Stage Fright* (1950) plus
 Every Sunday Judy Garland & Deanna Durbin

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

Further information from Michael Armstrong [01953 603246]

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].

26 January *Witness* (1985) [15]
 23 February *The Guernsey Literary and Potato Pie Society* (2018)
 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 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, 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!

16MM FILM SHOW

The Happiest Days of Your Life – the classic Launder and Gilliat comedy from 1950 starring Alistair Sim, Margaret Rutherford and Joyce Grenfell, plus supporting programme.

Friday 8 February at 7:30pm. Burnt Ash Methodist Church Hall, Burnt Ash Hill, Lee, London, SE12 0QD. Adults £5.00 Children £2.00 Admission by programme, available on the day. Space is limited so please phone or text Martin Cleave on 020 8658 3319 / 07958 063711 if you would like to attend, or for further details.

FRANK MATCHAM'S MASTERPIECES ON FILM

Tyne Theatre and Opera House, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Thursday 4 April by Richard Norman

A chance to see a repeat of the special presentation *Frank Matcham's Masterpieces on Film*, originally screened at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London in 2017. The presentation was created to illustrate examples of Matcham's theatres used as location sets in feature films enabling us to see his work as 'theatre architect extraordinaire'. This event is combined with optional guided tours of two Grade I listed theatres – the Theatre Royal and Tyne Theatre and Opera House.

Organised by the Frank Matcham Society and open to non-members. Further details and bookings are included on the flyer inserted with this Bulletin. Enquiries email: [RichardNormanCTA@aol.com]

FIFTH ANNUAL RENOWN FESTIVAL OF BRITISH FILM

Sunday 24 March – 10am to 7pm

The Alban Arena, St Albans, AL1 3LD

The people behind the *Talking Pictures* TV Channel present a variety of films, shorts and celebrity guests from British film and TV from the eras of the 1940s, 50s and 60s. Guests scheduled to appear include Bernard Cribbins, Marty Wilde, Anne Aubrey and Craig Douglas. Also a huge variety of stalls selling films, DVDs, memorabilia and books, including the CTA Sales Stall. Tickets (£25) from 0808 178 8212 or [renownfilms.co.uk]. New bigger venue for 2019!

THE BUZZ WORD

Gala Leisure is rebranding its Gala Bingo clubs as Buzz Bingo. The fresh branding will be aimed at bringing in younger audiences. The plan revolves around a £40 million investment in their bingo clubs across the UK over the next two years. They introduced Buzz Bingo in two clubs initially before converting every Gala Leisure club across the country to their new brand. Gala Leisure also stated that they found the word "buzz" is a word that "customers regularly used to describe their bingo experience," while resonating within the company.

According to Gala Leisure, the rebrand is a move on recent trends showing that the younger generations are going out more often and the Caledonia Investments owned company is hoping to bring a new generation of bingo players into their clubs across the country. Back in 2015, the entire Gala brand was under one owner: Gala Coral Group. In June of 2015, Gala Coral Group and Ladbroke's announced a merger to create the largest bookmaker in Britain. However, in the merger, the Gala Bingo clubs were not included and sold to Caledonia Investments in December of that year.

Gala Leisure Press Release – 29 June 2018

Ken Roe writes: I was showing a friend from New York around London cinemas on 3 November and first port of call was the Granada Tooting. Bingo was being played at 10:30am. Gala have now gone from the building and it is operated by Buzz Bingo. There is currently scaffold covering the front of the building with restoration work being carried out and new signage being installed. The staff on duty are the same; Jeevah is still the manager (although assistant manager Mustapha was not on duty, which is strange as he normally works weekends). I was told it was his day off and I was directed to speak to Raj, who I have never met before. The doors to the Hall of Mirrors and doors into the circle are now chained & padlocked and the manager had to get hold of the handyman to unlock those for us. They have never been locked previously. The only other difference was that the stained glass windows on both sides of the proscenium were illuminated, something which has not been seen for many years. The candelabra in front of them were not illuminated. Around the rear exterior of the building facing the car park the signage has been changed to Buzz Bingo. The Buzz Bingo website [www.buzzbingo.com] states it is open for bingo until 2am weekdays and 3am weekends!

Also sent in by Ben Doman & Malcolm Gambles

GERMAN CINEMA TAKEOVER

Vue is set to buy German cinema chain CineStar for €221.8 million [£195m]. The German chain has 57 sites with a total of 449 screens. It is Vue's third transaction of 2018, after it bought Showtime in Ireland and Cinema3D in Poland.

Evening Standard, Daily Mirror, Daily Telegraph – 23 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth, Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton

MOONLIGHT FLIT?

The Moonlight Drive-in cinema had booked a number of screenings at the Hop Farm in Paddock Wood (Kent) throughout December. But when customers turned up to watch *The Grinch* on 7 December they found no trace of a screen. Customers are looking for refunds and the landowner is chasing for money too. Tickets for each event were selling for around £25 a car.

Kent Online – 13 December; sent in by Philip Stevens

NO BLOCKBUSTER FROM FOX

Quarterly revenues at 21st Century Fox's filmed entertainment division fell 7.5% to \$1.82bn, hit by the absence of a major movie success. Owner Rupert Murdoch agreed in June to sell to Disney for \$71.3bn [£54.3bn] and is nearing completion of the deal after receiving approval from the European Commission.

City AM – 8 November; sent in by Tom Laughlan

THEATRE MANAGEMENT CHANGES

Selladoor has won a contract to run the Queen's Theatre in Barnstaple and the Landmark Theatre in Ilfracombe. The two North Devon theatres closed suddenly in 2017 after the trust that managed them went into administration; Parkwood Theatres won a 12-month contract to run the venues. The news comes just a few weeks after it was announced that Selladoor would be programming the Pavilion Theatre in Blackpool.

The Stage – 29 November; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

CINEWORLD PROFITS

Cineworld revenues rose 11.6% in the year to 11 November 2018 as UK box office sales gained 6.4%. It said its plans for Regal, the US cinema chain it bought for £2.4bn in early 2018, were progressing well.

Daily Telegraph – 16 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth

BRITISH FILMING

According to the British Film Institute, filmmakers spent £1.9bn producing movies in Britain in 2017, a 23% increase on 2016. Of that, £1.7bn came from foreign firms. Disney's new film *Nutcracker* had total costs of £103.8m, of which around £85.6m was spent in Britain.

Mail on Sunday – 28 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

PORTSMOUTH MOVIES FOR A FIVER

The decision by Vue to lower ticket prices at several of their sites (see Bulletin 52/2 & 52/6) has led to a fascinating price war in Portsmouth. In response to the fourteen-screen Vue at Gunwharf charging £4.99 a ticket, the six screen Odeon at Port Solent (four miles north) has lowered ticket prices by more than a half to £5. Odeon's decision proved a success almost immediately with sell-out screenings and over 3,000 admissions daily on the last two weekends in November. Although the Vue has 14 screens and is a newer build, it's located at the south of the City and the roads leading to it are often gridlocked; car parking is also expensive. The Odeon Port Solent, however, which is located in a marina at the north of the City, is easily accessed and has free car parking. Whereas Vue is surrounded by elitist eateries, Port Solent is surrounded by more modest food outlets, including a Wetherspoon, making a family trip to the movies a cheaper bet if you fancy a meal with your film, as many people now do. From personal experience, it must be said that the staff at Odeon are also far more welcoming and certainly much better at doing their job.

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe

ODEON DEFENDS HIGH PRICES

Odeon has responded to criticism over the prices it is charging for seats at its newly reopened Odeon Luxe cinema in London's Leicester Square, where tickets will cost up to £40. It said the prices were similar to tickets for theatre or live sports. In fact, ticket prices will vary with the film, date and time and location within the theatre. The cheapest seats will be traditional seats in the rear circle at £10. See Newsreel p25.

BBC News website – 4 December; sent in by Philip Stevens

OH YES, IT IS!



Newcastle Theatre Royal's spectacular 2018/19 pantomime *Goldilocks & the Three Bears* will be beamed out for free to 137,000 hospital beds across the UK this Christmas, continuously over a three week period. It is estimated that it could reach half a million children who are poorly during the festive season. The cast have filmed a special performance of the pantomime, which will be transmitted for free to bedside Hospedia screens in 180 NHS hospitals across England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The screenings will run continuously for 20 days between Thursday 20 December and Tuesday 8 January to enable as many children as possible to see the team in full big top circus action.

Theatre Royal Press Release – 17 December

MISCELLANY

MILITARY CINEMAS IN WWI

Research by the University of Exeter has shown that there were double the number of military cinemas on the Western Front than previously thought. The makeshift cinemas, in abandoned town halls, barns purpose-built huts or simply in the open air were only a few miles behind the trenches. Soldiers were assigned roles as projectionists or to secure the latest releases from distributors back home. They often managed to put on screenings three times a day, despite having to work in basic conditions with equipment prone to failure. Soldiers were most interested in watching slapstick comedies such as Charlie Chaplin and were frequently dismissive of topical fiction or documentary films depicting the war itself. There was even an army film depot near Dunkirk, where films were stored.

The Independent – 7 November

THE LOST IS FOUND

A reel of 16mm film that lay forgotten in an attic turned out to be a horror movie missing for over 50 years. The 20-minute reel was bought for £5 in 1984 in a Brighton junk shop and turned out to be a 1953 Edgar Allen Poe short *The Tell-Tale Heart*. The BFI had been trying to track down the print to include in their archive.

Metro – 23 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton

A 'lost' 1928 two-minute film called *Neck and Neck* featuring Oswald the Lucky Rabbit has been found in Japan. Disney created the character in 1927, a year before he came up with Mickey Mouse.

Daily Telegraph – 16 November; sent in by Carl Chesworth

Two long-lost episodes of *Morecambe & Wise* were discovered in a derelict cinema in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The original tapes have long since been wiped and recycled, as they were expensive in those days. These were probably on 16mm film and were flown home in time for Christmas. There was a civil war in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002 and the national archives were destroyed.

Mail Online – 26 November; sent in by Martin Tapsell

INVISIBLE ADVERT

Movie-goers watching *Now You See Me 3* at the Regent Street Cinema were provided with polarising glasses to turn a white screen into a two-minute clip to prevent bank fraud. Santander said four in ten customers under 25 admitted to sharing online passwords.

Evening Standard – 21 November; sent in by Mike Collins & Tom Laughlan

STATELY HOME THEATRE



Chatsworth House (Derbys) has a 100-seat private theatre tucked away on the first floor of a tower at the north end of a long wing of the house. It was added by Wyatville between 1820 and 1827 and brought back into use about ten years ago. It is a rare example of a private theatre in a British stately home. The Chatsworth Players perform plays there twice a year. See [tinyurl.com/y7xzs8g]

Derby Telegraph – 17 October; sent in by Peter Good

POSTER SALES

Film & TV Memorabilia firm Prop Store held an online auction of rare movie posters at the BFI IMAX in London on 20 November. There were posters for the *Carry On* films, *Star Wars* and *James Bond*. The estimated total was £250,000; *From Russia with Love* fetched £8,610. A complete set of results can be seen at [tinyurl.com/yc7ffr4h].

Metro – 23 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth & Barry Quinton

Seven rare *Mickey Mouse* vintage posters went on display in Shoreditch (East London) before being auctioned by Sothebys in November. According to their website [tinyurl.com/yanylq88] only three sold, the highest going for £13,750.

Metro – 14 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

MOST INFLUENTIAL FILM EVER?

The Wizard of Oz has been named as the most influential film of all time. The 1939 classic beat the original *Star Wars* in a rating based on computer analysis of fans' views. It was the film most referred to in the descriptions on the 47,000 entries in the Internet Movie Database [www.imdb.com].

Daily Mail – 30 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

1940S FILMING

On Saturday 20 October a platform at Brighton Station was closed and transformed into a film set for a new movie *Summerland*. Passengers saw 1940s costumes and cars. There was even a film poster depicting a 1939 Laurence Olivier film. Stars include Sir Tom Courtney and Dame Penelope Wilton. Scenes were also filmed in Hastings and Seaford.

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

PIPE DOWN SHERIDAN

Actress Sheridan Smith disguised herself and sneaked into a preview showing of her new film *Funny Girl* at a local [unspecified] Vue cinema. A fan told her to be quiet and got a shock when she revealed who she was.

Sunday Mirror – 11 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

PAINT THE TOWN BLUE WITH WOMEN'S PLAQUES

Dame Judi Dench as urged people to nominate unsung female heroes after it emerged women account for just 14% of blue plaques in London. The blue plaque scheme started in 1866 but it was ten years before the first woman, actress Sarah Siddons, was recognised. By 1986, when English Heritage took over, there were only 45 plaques celebrating women; since then, more than 40 have been unveiled. There are more than 900 plaques in total. To nominate someone for a plaque visit [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques].

Evening Standard – 21 November; sent in by Mike Collins & Tom Laughlan

BLACKPOOL CINEMAS TOUR

Blackpool hosted a monthly cinema tour in 2018, finishing with afternoon tea at the Regent. The cost was £12.50. It is not known if they will be running in 2019 – see [www.visitblackpool.com].

Sent in by Hugh & Susan Patching

AN UN-HONOURED CRAFTSMAN

By Alvin Richard Plough

There's a man we never see, given no publicity;
Working on so you may view all the movies that are new,
Without flickering or break, though his tired arms may ache.
Ever watching through his 'peep' into darkness broad and deep,
Save when penetrating ray lights the screen as bright as day.
Toiling ever on his feet, in the blinding glare and heat,
Threading film in a machine, that projects it on the screen.
Keeping carbon lamps aglow, cleaning after every show,
Looking out for censor's seals, or rewinding all the reels;
Mending breaks by clever patches, blamed for laboratory scratches.
Unseen is the part that's his, this un-honoured craftsman is:
THE MOVIE OPERATOR.

Motion Picture News – 1917; sent in by Carl Chesworth

LETTERS

METROPOLE VICTORIA

Regarding my article on the **Metropole** on the back page of the last Bulletin. I would just like to make it clear that the **Classic Victoria** only had the auditorium part demolished in the 1980s, along with the **Metropole**. As stated in the article the whole block was completely demolished in 2010.

David A Ellis

I greatly enjoyed David Ellis' piece on the **Metropole**, especially the reference to the reincarnated foyer. The left hand b/w photo of its frontage 1972 also shows its neighbour, Suttons (a jeweller and pawnbroker). When I worked for the Asprey Group (which included Suttons) I was frequently in the shop, which had a huge basement that extended under the **Metropole's** footprint. I frequently lunched at the very nice Italian ASK restaurant and often speculated about its effusive decoration. I can't believe I didn't work out that it was part of a former super cinema.

Stewart Kidd

PALLADIUM MIDSOMER NORTON



Following Hugh Sykes's sad picture of the **Palladium Midsomer Norton** in the last Bulletin, I thought you might like a contrasting picture taken two Saturdays ago [6 November]. The oval plaque to the right of the main doors records the history of the cinema and there are several nicely framed archive pictures inside. The auditorium was never highly decorated but what there was in the way of décor has been carefully highlighted by an appropriate paint scheme. The overall effect is airy and cheerful and the building seems just right for its new role. It was certainly heaving with customers at 11am on a Saturday morning!

Giles Woodforde

INDIAN FILM RATINGS METER

Not a holiday snap as I did not see any operating cinemas whilst travelling in India and only a reference to a multiplex in an adverts for a new shopping mall. However, I found the following film rating meter in the *Hindustan Times*, which you might, useful:

- * Terrifyingly terrible
- ** Not worth it
- *** One time watch
- **** First class
- ***** Super awesome

Sent in by Tony Williams

CECIL HULL

The **Cecil Hull** ended up being reopened by MGM as a trial for a new concept, **Take 2**, where older films were shown at cheaper prices as a way of keeping poor performing cinemas going. The idea (by then MD Mike Summers) didn't catch on and no other **Take 2** cinemas opened. (Page from the *MGM News* [R]).

Ben Doman



LYME REGIS CLARIFICATION

I hope that Mike Whitcombe will not mind my correcting three errors in his report on the **Regent Lyme Regis**, which appeared on page 16 of the November/December 2018 edition of the Bulletin. The cause of the fire was not determined and will never be known. The blaze was so intense that there was nothing left that might have provided an explanation. The fire even weakened the auditorium walls, which had to be demolished as they were unsafe. The doors that separated the auditorium from the foyers were not newly installed. It was the original 1937 hardwood doors that helped to prevent the fire from destroying the entrance block and foyer areas. And lastly, **Scott Cinemas** has always been based in Newton Abbott, not Barnstaple.

Tony Williams

Mike Whitcombe replies: I'm mortified that Tony believes I've made several mistakes. I'm pretty thorough in my research (I love researching) and always try and double check everything. I wouldn't like you to think that I'm sending you stuff that I haven't researched as the Bulletin is all about facts and not half-truths. For instance, I spent around four hours researching and double checking the small piece I recently sent you about the **Ritz at Burnham on Sea** [on back page].

If you don't mind, I'll just give you my sources for two of the facts that Tony points out as incorrect in the article about the **Regent Lyme Regis** (I was definitely wrong about **Scott Cinemas** being based in Barnstaple and apologise for that) just so you appreciate that there was a reason for writing what I did. I wrote the fire was started by a faulty light fitting whereas Tony says the cause of the fire was not determined and will never be known. My statement came from three sources:

- **Scott Cinemas press release 24/3/16**, which stated "The authorities have confirmed that there are no suspicious circumstances surrounding the fire, which was caused by an electrical fault within the roof void of the building."
- **BBC News 23/6/16**, which stated that Dorset Fire and Rescue said a faulty light fitting was the probable cause.
- **Bridport News 30/6/17** in which journalist Katie Williams writes that an insurance claim had been agreed and that the cause of the fire was an "electrical fault".

Having stumbled through several cinema roof voids with electrical cables that would crumble if touched, I felt a faulty light fitting was more than likely. And I believed that the several articles I read pointed to the fact that cause had been determined. Tony also makes the point that the original foyer doors stopped the fire spreading to the foyer as new doors had not been fitted. This could well be true but I made the point because in the *Lyme Regis News* 23/3/18, journalist Francesca Evans wrote that "thanks to the installation of new fire doors during a refurbishment that had just been completed, the Art Deco frontage of the building was left largely unscathed." Again this did make sense. I had overseen the installation of new fire doors at a couple of cinemas when I was a projectionist and I thought it made sense that any refurb (particularly in 2016) would include up-to-date fire doors between an auditorium and the foyer.

I wish I had spoken to Tony about the **Regent** before writing the piece because I certainly wouldn't have recorded anything as a fact if there were alternative theories! And I certainly wouldn't send you misleading facts. Your job is difficult enough without people sending you stuff that isn't correct.

SUNDAY OPENING IN SKIPTON

Many thanks to CTA Bulletin and Lesley Tate for this interesting piece. It mentions the 1949 film *A Boy, a Girl and a Bike*, which I found on YouTube and enjoyed greatly. A delightful period piece with great scenery of Yorkshire! It was good to see Honor Blackman as a young actress. When I lived in Earls Court (west London) in the 1980s she was a famous resident of Tregunter Road, I believe that now in her 90s she still lives there!

PS: As well as British actors such as Diana Dors and Anthony Newley, the film stars John McCallum, who though sounding very English was apparently Australian? He later married Googie Withers; they settled in Australia, where he became a leading film producer.

Caroline Behr

RESEARCHING CINEMA HISTORY / ADELPHI SLOUGH

After reading about the attempt to gain an exempt from listing for the Adelphi Slough a few issues ago, my mind was jogged to a photograph in the local library's clippings I saw some years back. The cinema was built in the grounds of two mansions, Montom and Montrose and the photo was of these with a near completed cinema in the background with a note that the mansions were soon to be demolished for the car park. In trying to trace the clipping I discovered, rather disturbingly, that all the press clippings had been thrown out in the move to our new library as "nobody looked at them anyway". Not only that but also many of the newspaper copies were gone along with the bulk of the original photographs that were held. Echoing David A Ellis's letter in bulletin 52/6, this apparent lack of importance being placed on local history will mean that parts of it will be lost forever. It may be worth getting to your local library to see what they have before it's gone.

Ben Doman

ABC/REEL PLYMOUTH



I have just finished reading *The Last Picture House* concerning the Reel [ex ABC] cinema in Plymouth. The front picture shows that quite a few of the fluorescent tubes in the canopy readograph have failed and not been replaced. Due to lack of care to detail this sort of suggests that the neon tubing no longer works. I took this night-time picture back in 2006 in happier times when it was quite an impressive façade but several years later this was showing signs of failing and past its best. Good luck to the campaigners in trying to keep this iconic cinema open. The photo was taken with an early (cheap) digital camera so the resolution is not as I would have liked.

Alan Hodson

TO LIST OR NOT TO LIST: FORMER CARLTON THEATRE, HAYMARKET.

I cannot join in the celebration caused by the grade II listing of London's former Carlton Theatre, Haymarket. This is without disrespect to what is currently called the Empire cinema but sparked by my disgust at the extremely dubious criteria Historic England use when assessing buildings for listing.

Historic England twice denied listing the now shamefully demolished Futurist Theatre in Scarborough, despite it being a completely intact and fully equipped working theatre. The reason given for withholding listing was alteration to the auditorium in the fifties and external modernisation during the following decade. The ciné-variety theatre was given a wider proscenium in the fifties to enable ex West End variety shows to be staged for summer seasons. Such productions were very successful and put not only the Futurist but also Scarborough itself 'on the map' for many years. Although somewhat plainer than the original, the new rectangular proscenium looked well in the vast auditorium. The external, latterly unsightly, cladding of the façade, more modern canopy and entrance doors were all capable of being removed and thus reversible.

Contrast this with the former Carlton. The entire stage house was demolished in the late seventies – even the original safety curtain was destroyed in the process. The former stalls was divided down the centre to accommodate two small cinemas, which for many years now have been in a very tatty state. With neither screen tabs nor effect lighting and seat cushions with tears covered by adhesive tape, these two screens have been for some time very seedy places in which to watch films. The original Royal Circle (mezzanine level with level

access from the foyer) was lost in the tripling and used instead as a projection box serving the subterranean mini cinemas. The balcony of the old Carlton became a not unpleasant main screen but only the ceiling and ornate cornice give any hint of the Carlton Theatre's magnificence. The screen frame and masking are fully visible, since this screen is also denied screen tabs or any atmospheric lighting other than two of the Carlton's chandeliers.

So this mish-mash of what remains of the Carlton is listed, while the intact Futurist was refused potential protection. Short of using inconsistent assessment criteria for theatre buildings, one can only assume pressure from the various well-meaning organisations in favour of listing the Carlton caused Historic England to waver and list what is essentially the wreck of a once opulent West End theatre, while leaving a complete theatre to its fate.

I visited the Carlton in its cinema days long before its partial destruction and tripling, when Fox still owned the place and it was very impressive indeed; a huge CinemaScope screen and faultless presentation with two sets of tabs and footlights – now that would have justified listing. I've also visited several times within the last few years when the experience has been a decidedly shabby one.

Listing alone will never guarantee a theatre or cinema immunity from crass conversion to other uses or demolition but it can give such buildings a fighting chance. Historic England has clearly shown its double standards and what is urgently needed is a better informed replacement body to be more aware of the implications listing or otherwise could have on a building's intended function and then have the courage of its conviction to render itself less vulnerable to pressure.

James Bettley

BABY SCREENINGS

I have to say I understand why Cineworld refused to let a woman take her baby into *A Star is Born* because of its [15] rating. (Cinema Business, CTA Bulletin November/December 2018). Back in 1989/1990 I had no choice but to turn a woman and baby away from a [15] film while working in the Odeon Reading. The issue is the same now as it was then. If someone gets into a [15] or [18] film under age, the cinema can lose its licence. I didn't think it was fair then and I still don't now.

Here's the question. Is it time all the ratings, with the exception of the Restricted 18 category for licensed cinema clubs only, became advisory? Let's be honest, what control do the authorities really have over who watches DVDs or Blu-Rays once they have been purchased or who watches post watershed TV? Add to that the increasing use of simultaneous cinema and digital home release used by distributors like Curzon? With so many ways to watch movies now out there, that cannot be controlled, is it fair that a cinema could lose its licence because someone a bit under age has got into a [15] or [18] film? Especially when the person concerned could easily watch the same film at home without anybody being sanctioned? Yes, you can password protect content on digital TV boxes but that's down to you and voluntary.

Is it time for the [12], [15] and [18] ratings to simply mean "not recommended for persons under 12/15/18 years of age" and leave it at that? Cinemas would still have the right to refuse admission and would still turn away those who are obviously too young, in the same way pubs refuse more alcohol to those who have clearly had enough. Add to that Councils often change absurd BBFC decisions without anyone coming to harm. For example Bristol changed *This is England* from an [18] to a [15], a decision that made total sense because it enabled teenagers to see a film aimed at them and, more importantly, challenge attitudes on racism.

Only recently I was watching *King of Thieves*, a [15] film, in a Liverpool multiplex and noticed a parent and an obviously under-age child in the auditorium. I only noticed them when they appeared to leave before the end of the movie but if a parent is knowingly taking a child into a restricted film, why should the cinema be held responsible? Is it time for a shift of responsibility to go to the parents? Surely it's time for them to take responsibility for what their children watch. Hopefully that will include engaging with them about what they have seen and what it's about.

I don't know if anyone has noticed but the only security to watch restricted online content – including trailers on the BBFC website – is to enter your date of birth. Any teenager who can count can subtract a few numbers from their own date of birth to watch such content and I'm sure they do. As long as the law stands as it is, I'll support any cinema doing what it has to do to keep its licence. What do people think?

Fabian Breckles

MATTERS ARISING

Thanks for another excellent Bulletin. A couple of points I especially noticed; one was 'Babes in Arms Not Admitted'. The local Harbour Lights cinema had recently had special showings of the 'Babes in Arms' programmes, which included Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*. Although I have never seen the film (it has never appealed to me) the famous shower scene has been shown on television. It does not seem suitable for babies under three as babies under that age must be developing an intelligence and would react to some of the screaming in the film. I think that parents should think twice before taking an infant to one of these screenings and enquire about the films content even if it is classified as [12] or [12A].

The other was 'Where Are They Now' about the disappearance of Sexploitation cinemas. The *Tatlers* in Southampton, Bournemouth, and Portsmouth have all now closed. All showed uncensored films with membership required. The Bournemouth cinema was used as a night-club when I was last there and the Portsmouth cinema in the Shaftesbury Hall is now threatened with demolition. The Penthouse cinema in Abbey Street, Leicester is also closed and is in use by a church. The Palace in Portsmouth (in a dreadful state at time of closure in 1980) is now used as a nightclub under a different name. In the 1970s a number of censored films with sexual content were shown by local cinemas. I remember *The Language of Love* – a Swedish educational sex film shown at the ABC. In addition a lady called Chesty Morgan – noted for being well endowed by nature – was on the circuits. All this type of material seems to have disappeared from cinema screens.

Ian Patterson



DEMOLISH CINEMA AND LEAVE

On p23 of the last Bulletin someone wrote in the *Evening Standard* that the Council wanted the Odeon Kensington reopened – but there is nothing left apart from the façade! The same can be said about the former Cineworld (ex Regal) Hammersmith just down the road from me. The site has been cleared apart from one wall down the side and part of the stage block and the rest has been gone over two years. I have to wonder what's happening about these former cinemas – they should still be open and showing films until they get their act together and start the building work.

Malcolm Gambles

RITZ NUNEATON

I'd just like to make a small correction to the *A Wander around North Warwickshire* report (Bulletin Nov/Dec 18) in reference to the Ritz Nuneaton. Mike Flook actually took the lease from EMI in 1977; he also was responsible for the twinning – screen ② in the former rear stalls seated around 200, still leaving 1,200 seats in screen ① (the circle and front stalls area). Ray Wyatt took over the lease from Mike some time later. At around the same time Mike also had a lease on the Oak (ABC) Selly Oak Birmingham. Sad to report Mike Flook died on 20 November 2018 aged 89. Here is a picture of Mike taken during the twinning of the Ritz.

Bernard Snowball



When the Ritz closed under EMI it was leased to well-known operator Mike Flook and not Roy Whyatt as stated. Mike also built a second screen in the right hand side of the stalls, utilising the Gents' toilet as a projection room with a GK21 and tower and a mirror system. Mike was there for some time and sold the lease to Roy Whyatt at a later date. The mirror system was a right bodge-up with the mirror being propped up by a piece of wood – but it worked!

Trevor Harris

WALTURDAW



Just read latest Bulletin; I was intrigued by the letter from Alan Ashton mentioning the Walturdaw (name like an amalgam) equipment company. They seemed to have carried out many interior works for cinemas and hotels, including carpet, curtains, light fittings, seating, plaster detail etc. Above is a picture of their entrance foyer of the Regal Oxford, a cinema built by my favourite cinema Architect Robert Cromie in 1937. [Editor's Note:](#) See article on p16.

Ron Knee

In the last Bulletin there was mention of Walturdaw projectors at the Chiltern cinema in Beaconsfield. The information is correct; from memory I think they were '5s' as I moved them out myself with my friend from Birmingham, Les Bradley and we put in a pair of GK21s for Tim Partner, who had a small chain of cinemas. They had some trouble with the projectors [Walturdaw] breaking down so we put in the 21s on 83 soundheads and 18 stands. There was also trouble with the amplifier with a very low volume output and Les fixed this. I cannot remember if the Walturdaws were all in one piece or not as we just dragged them out of the way. This may have been in the early 80s as I had several 21 outfits and Magnarcs after clearing a lot of them from Ron Clark's in London, who had sheds full of them, I think from Rank.

Trevor Harris

COMING SOON



Here is a photo I took it last Sunday [18 November]. It was in an estate agents' window in Chapel Street, Worthing. It shows the yet-to-be-built apartments in the old Luxor Cinema in Lancing.

Mike Whitcombe

DOMINION / ABC / SAFARI HARROW

There was a second screen in the old restaurant at Harrow (which had its own entrance to the right of the main doors), with access from that screen's projection room into the space between the old and new frontages. Last time I looked (well over a decade ago) most of the original frontage could be seen but was in a very poor state. The cinema had an unusual layout for a 1930s super cinema in that there are many staircases to the different parts of the building rather than areas linked to each other. Quite a maze.

Ben Doman

REOPEN MOCKERY

We live in a confrontational age and clearly the spoof newspaper on the *Reopen the Regent* Facebook site [*East Kent Mockery* (not Mercury)] is becoming more strident as the *Regent* owners stall on even keeping the building in repair. A councillor is asking why Dover District Council has granted leeway to carry out their Section 215 repair notice, while meanwhile *Reopen* demonstrate outside with paint pots and brushes. My guess is that in 2019 the cinema will become beyond restoration and there will be talk of replacement flats – a lucrative end game. The chances of *Reopen* and the owners getting along for the good of Deal are zero. Meanwhile the owners who bought the *Regent* years ago say they are very close to putting in a new planning application, so perhaps Deal will get some films, either Mondays only or daily.

Martin Tapsell

ADVERTISING ON SAFETY CURTAINS

The item in Bulletin 51/6 about advertising on the safety curtains of theatres produced some interesting correspondence in subsequent issues. Now comes news that the *London Coliseum* has applied to Westminster City Council for permission to adapt its safety curtain by painting “a plain white surface” on it (in other words a screen!) to enable the showing of advertising before performances and during the interval. The plan is to show trailers for forthcoming productions but there is speculation that cinema-style advertisements could well follow, particularly as English National Opera has admitted it is looking at possible new revenue streams in the light of its recent well publicised financial difficulties.

Ray Dolling

439 - 435 GODSTONE ROAD, WHYTELEAF (SURREY)



While at College in the early 1980s I, had to visit the offices of the Rank Organisation (Technical Dept) about a construction project. Since then the Company has changed hands on several occasions and the offices [above] have gone and a very large Travelodge now takes its place. Has any member stayed there and not known its history?

Tim McCullen

CIRCUIT HISTORIES AVAILABLE

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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

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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.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

110 years

Electric Theatre 75 Upper Street, Islington, London. Opened 6 February 1909. Architect Melville S Ward. Grade II listed. [R]



105 years

Kings/Cameo 30 Home Street, Tollcross, Edinburgh. Opened 8 January 1914. Architect unknown. Grade B listed. [No photo]

Cinema de Luxe/Carlton 17 Oxford Street, Swansea. Opened 31 January 1914. Architect Charles Tamlin Ruthen. Façade only listed grade II. [No photo]

90 years



Capitol/ABC 11 London Road, Forest Hill, London. Opened 11 February 1929. Architect John Stanley Beard. Grade II listed. [Above]



Picture House Bridge Street, Stafford. Opened 23 February 1914. Architect Campbell & Fairhurst. Grade II listed. [Above]

95 years



Oxford Super / ABC / Odeon, Magdalen Street, Oxford. Opened 1 January 1924. Architect JC Leeds. Grade II listed. [Above]



Regent / Gaumont / Odeon Piccadilly, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent. Opened 11 February 1929. Architect William Edward Trent. Grade II* listed. [Above]

85 years



Pyramid/Odeon 22 Washway Road, Sale, Manchester. Opened 24 February 1934. Architect FE Drury / Joseph Gomersall. Grade II listed. [Above]

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to be able to send our warm greetings to the following new members of the CTA: Mark Nice and Alistair Rea.

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Malcolm Davis, a CTA member since 1996, has now taken Life Membership.

DONATIONS

Our members have once again shown their generosity by adding a donation when renewing their subscriptions. Our grateful thanks go to: JCS Altman, RS Anderson, DC Bishop, EG Bottle, BF Collins, NA Corbett, PF Doughty, R Duerden, L Essex, DW Faircloth, DJ Gardiner, WG Gilbert, RJ Gillings, PJ Goff, VF Harvey, HJ Hill, GE Hooper, AF Hughes, PD Jennings, J Kennett, MR King, AJ Kirkham, T Ladlow, B Lamport, A Lazou, AJ Marston, KC McFarlane, N Mirza, IP Nash, T Pate, AJ Peel, PR Phillips, JM Pritchard, FRA Rosen, JG Rumble, JD Simmonds, CA Simmons, RD Simpson, SD Simpson, BR Stevenson, KM Wakefield, WE Watters, MW Weston, JWH White and AG Williams.

Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary

OBITUARIES

EVELYN ARCHER 78



Evelyn was the lady credited with saving the Winter Gardens in Morecambe. She had been a nurse and a bed and breakfast owner before entering politics as an independent on Lancaster City Council. She was friends with Thora Hird and Ken Dodd and had a passion for bringing entertainment back to Morecambe. Her strong principles and drive saved one of Morecambe's most historic buildings and she would not take no for an answer any time the theatre was under threat. Evelyn is pictured above with David Eve when the CTA visited Morecambe in June 2008

Morecambe Visitor – 5 November

The Projected Picture Trust

Dean Clough Mills, HALIFAX, HX3 5AX

The Projected Picture Trust exists to locate and preserve projectors and related film equipment, both professional and domestic. Since 1978 enthusiastic volunteers have been happy to help restore these items and so preserve THE MAGIC OF CINEMA.

The Trust provides help and assistance to non-commercial community cinemas and museums exhibiting film related artefacts.

The Museum of Cinema Technology has perhaps the largest collection of all types of film equipment in the UK. The Data Archive holds over 3,000 items including press cuttings, manuals and film related technical documents. We are presently looking to strengthen our management team...

PLEASE CONTACT US IF YOU ARE ABLE TO HELP
or if you would like to become a member only.

contact@ppttrust.org

www.ppttrust.org

ALAN RICHARDSON 94



Alan had a 27-year career with the BBC, where he was involved in building the broadcaster's film archives and later overseeing operations on shows including Dad's Army, The Two Ronnies, Morecambe and Wise and Monty Python.

In the 1980s Alan spearheaded a successful campaign to save Salisbury's Odeon from demolition. In a 1986 report, after a two-year fight which resulted in the demolition being called off, the *Salisbury Journal* (which supported the campaign) congratulated him, adding: "Thousands of local people will want us to say, 'well done and thank you'." Alan was also instrumental in raising funds for the city's current Playhouse building and supporting works to Salisbury Cathedral's spire.

For the love of Salisbury he became a City guide, a Cathedral steward and guide, a 'Tower Tour' guide, he relaunched and edited *The Cathedral News*, he sat on the board of directors at The Playhouse, he was president of the Theatregoers' Association, he created the theatre archives and he undoubtedly kept every bookshop in business with his insatiable love of books.

In 2016 Alan was awarded France's highest honour – the Légion d'honneur, for his involvement during the landings on D-Day, when, as a 20-year-old First Lieutenant, he helped to deliver a deadly cargo of ammunition to the Normandy beaches.

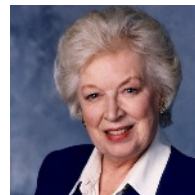
He was a member of the CTA from 1972 for 41 years.

Salisbury Journal – 27 November

NECROLOGY

DAME JUNE WHITFIELD 93

From her early radio roles in the 1950s, through to her scatty antics on *Absolutely Fabulous*, she made more than 1,300 appearances on radio and TV. She also appeared in four *Carry On* films. She was awarded an OBE in 1985 and CBE in 1998 and, in 2017, became a Dame. She called her autobiography *...and June Whitfield*, in recognition of the fact that she always got second billing.



NICHOLAS ROEG 90

He first came to attention as part of the second unit on *Lawrence of Arabia* but it was his co-direction of Mick Jagger's *Performance* that cemented his reputation. His films included *Walkabout* (1971) and *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976) starring David Bowie.



PUTTING ON THE RITZ

By Mike Whitcombe

There's nothing quite as magical as discovering for the first time a 1930s-built cinema that is still open and, even more importantly, clearly still loved and appreciated by both staff and customers alike. The Ritz in Burnham-on-Sea in North Somerset is one such magical find. It's not one of the big-city super cinemas lavishly built by ABC, Odeon or Gaumont during the heyday of cinema construction. Nor is it an untouched gem, still in its original single-screen state. In fact, the Ritz is a humble, old fashioned, much altered provincial picture palace in an unassuming seaside town. And therein lies its charm. For the Ritz is a typical example of the hundreds of local cinemas, many long-forgotten and demolished, that could once be found in every High Street throughout the land. These cinemas brought tantalising moments of hope to millions of overworked and under-appreciated citizens, earning fierce loyalty from these men and women in return.

The Ritz stands on the corner of Victoria Street and Vicarage Street, a block away from the Esplanade and a few yards north of a High Street that still proudly boasts a number of independent stores. It was built by Walter Trueman Dicken. He was a West Country businessman who converted eight cinemas across Somerset, one of which was the *Electric Theatre*, later renamed the *Majestic*, in Burnham's High Street. He closed this site, though, soon after opening the *Ritz*, which was the only cinema he built from scratch. A local amateur cinematographer called Norman Gobey filmed some of the construction on 9.5mm and the film, which can now be viewed on YouTube at [captureburnham.org.uk] is a fascinating insight into how health and safety wasn't such a concern during the interwar years.

The opening ceremony took place on Monday 13 July 1936 at 8pm. Major JM Sutherland (chairman of the Burnham Urban District Council) and Major Ben Travers officially opened the cinema along with stage and film actress Miss Binnie Hale. Her presence, according to the *Highbridge, Weston, Bridgewater and Somerset Advertiser* caused "huge cheers" and she received "a wonderful welcome" from patrons and onlookers alike. Miss Hale was in attendance as she was the star of the opening film called *Hyde Park Corner*, which had been adapted from the popular West End play of the same name. Described as "riotously funny" and "intensely dramatic", the movie was directed by Sinclair Hill and also featured Gordon Harker, Harry Tate and Eric Portman. The *Advertiser* added that widespread praise for WT Dicken and his decision to build the Ritz was noted during the opening speeches.

The original capacity of the Ritz was five hundred, split between circle and stalls. Business was good from the start and the Ritz continued to entertain Burnham folk even when cinemas throughout the land, whether small independents or huge picture palaces owned by the major chains, were closing at an alarming rate during the 1960s, 70s and 80s. In the summer of 2002, though, the Ritz closed. According to a press release, closure was because of "dwindling audience figures", a euphemism that often means lack of investment and imagination by the owners.

It was then that the current owner Patt Scott stepped in. He bought the Ritz and completely revitalised the cinema and the cultural heart of a town built on tourism. Over the next eighteen months Scott spent £120,000 renovating the building, converting the circle to two screens complete with air conditioning and a joint seating capacity of 230. The grand reopening was on Friday 17 September 2004 when *Shrek 2* and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* were screened. The projection equipment came from the Robins Cinema in Bath, which had closed nine months before.

Scott, a former aircraft engineer who became a projectionist as a secondary duty while serving in the RAF, continues to run the Ritz alongside his wife Beryl. Four years ago the duo funded another major refurbishment. This included the creation of a third screen that made use of an old room at the back of the building. Opening on Friday 23 October 2015, this latest addition has a seating capacity of 65.



It was a Saturday during October 2018 that my wife, Janice and I visited the Ritz. The long, hot summer of that year was showing no signs of departing and it was T-shirt and sunglasses weather when we arrived at the Ritz just before eleven in the morning. The cream painted frontage stood out against the blue of a perfect azure sky that didn't contain a whisper of cloud. The Ritz boasts three pairs of double entrance doors with the centre ones now being used for the Ritz Social Club. This occupies the former stalls and provides entertainment in the shape of live music, bingo, quiz shows, dance, pool and skittles while also boasting a popular bar and function suites. Entrance to the cinema is through the left hand set of double doors. Stairs then lead to what would have been the original circle foyer. This smartly painted area now contains a kiosk

where confectionary, drinks and tickets can be bought. Upcoming movie posters adorn the walls. Seats can be selected and purchased in advance, which is often advisable due to the popularity of the venue. All screens are fitted with NEC Digital projection, 5.1 Dolby Digital Sound and Dolby 3D. As a former projectionist whose job it once was to worry about such things, I can confirm that, after watching a couple of films in one day at the Ritz, the sound and picture quality is first class. Screen ① with some exceptionally comfortable seats, played host for our first visit of the day when we saw a lunchtime performance of *Small Foot*. A few hours later we attended an evening screening of *Halloween* (2018) in Screen ②. Before each film a member of staff came around with an ice cream tray, something you sadly see rarely nowadays. For the purpose of this article – at least that's my excuse – we naturally bought a couple of tubs and enjoyed them enormously.

In 2016 Patt and Beryl Scott bought the Westway Cinema in nearby Frome. In an article in the *Frome Times* after announcing the acquisition, Pat Scott remarked that "the Ritz has been a success since the day we started there. I think it's very important to look after your customers – that's our number one selling point." I would add that the care and attention to detail that has been lavished on transforming the eighty-two year old Ritz is also an important selling point. If any CTA members find themselves in the West Country, head for the Ritz in Burnham-on-Sea – you won't be disappointed.



My wife, Janice, in the foyer & ice cream sales in screen ①