



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

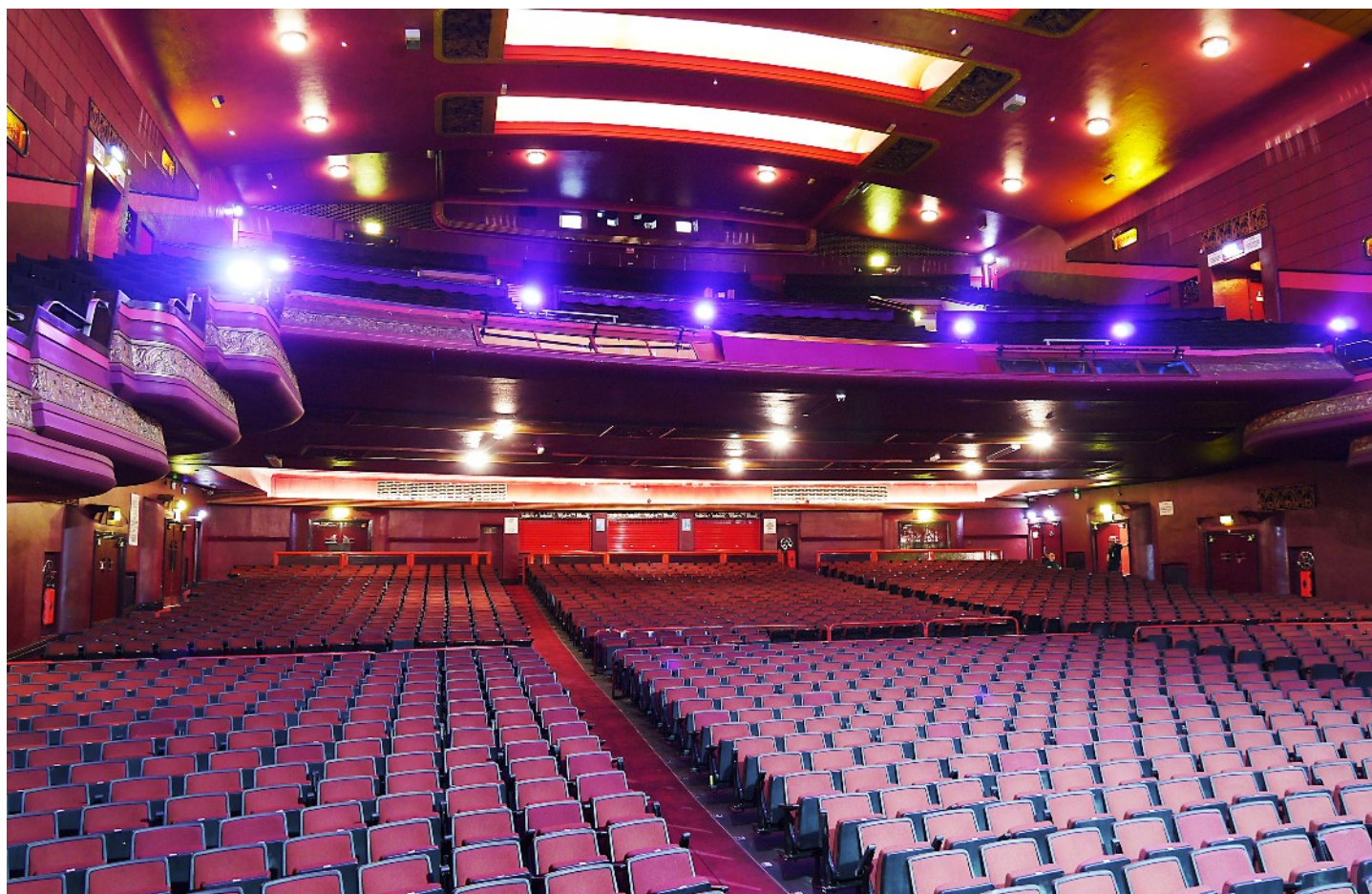
www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

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January / February 2019



The auditorium of the Apollo Ardwick, Manchester, visited by the CTA last August; 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.

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.

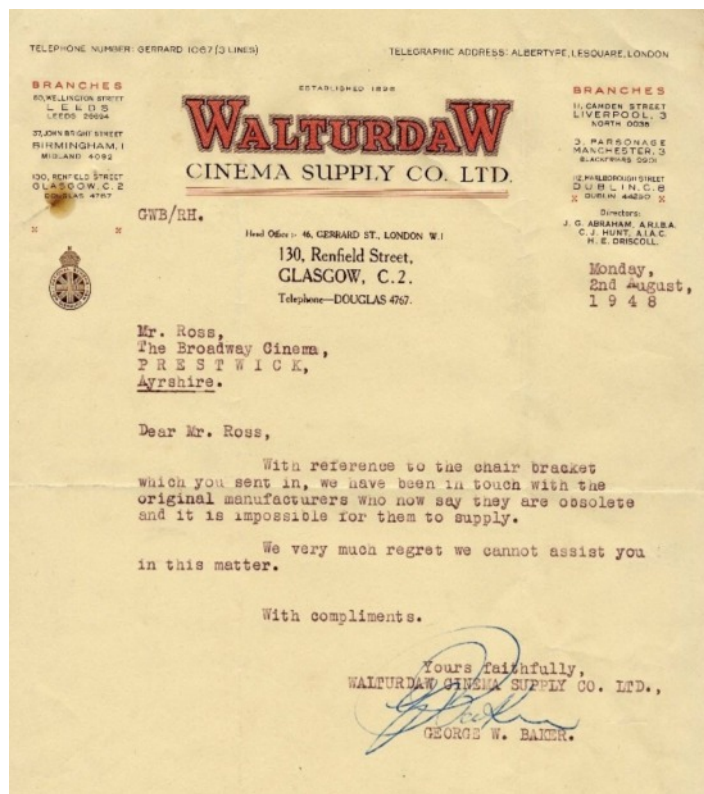
In the full Bulletin there is a very comprehensive article by Hector Hill on Walturdaw. CTA Scotland sent me a couple of letters from Walturdaw to the Broadway Prestwick, which are in their archive. I had no room to put them on the same page as the Walturdaw article so I have put one below. We have the 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.

Amongst the letters I received are two 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?

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..!

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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.

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WEDNESDAY 20 FEBRUARY

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN: Members are invited to submit items for possible publication to the Bulletin Editor. However, it is stressed that the publication of an item does not necessarily imply that it reflects the views of the Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor. It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise; items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor. Please state if you require items to be returned and enclose SAE, otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.
VISITS: Members and non-members are reminded that they attend visits entirely at their own risk and no responsibility can be accepted by the Cinema Theatre Association or the owners of the buildings for any accidents or injury sustained during the course of any visit.
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VISITS AND EVENTS

New Screens for Old... A South London Cinema resurrection 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.

The CTA's Swedish Adventure

By David Trevor-Jones



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.

East is Best – Part 2

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. 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.

**Most events are for members only;
details in the full Bulletin**

CASEWORK

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.

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.

More Casework in the full Bulletin

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.

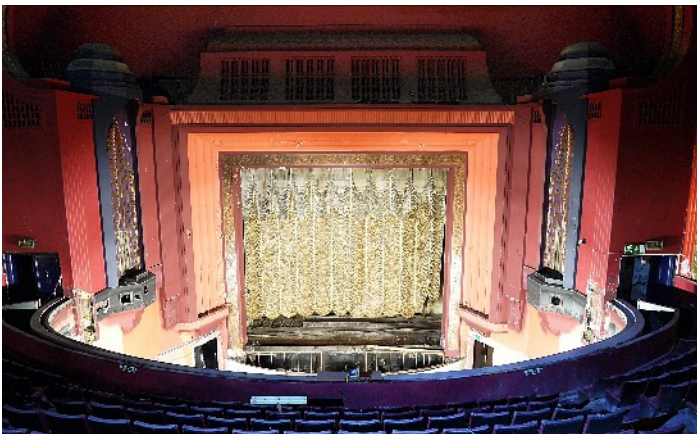


The façade and disused upstairs at the former Regal Rochdale



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.



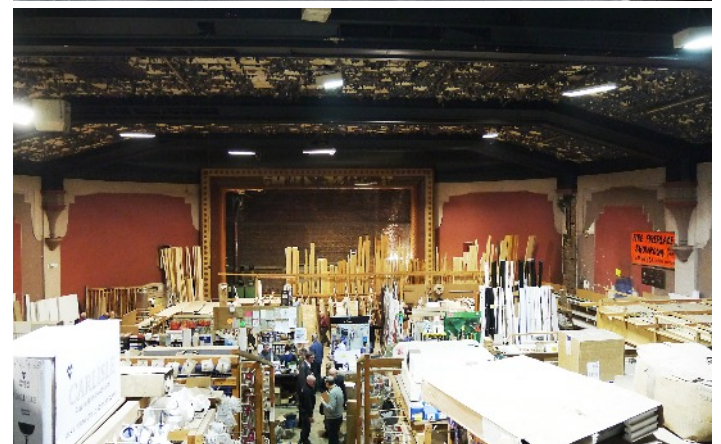
The new Odeon in the former Town Hall Oldham

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.



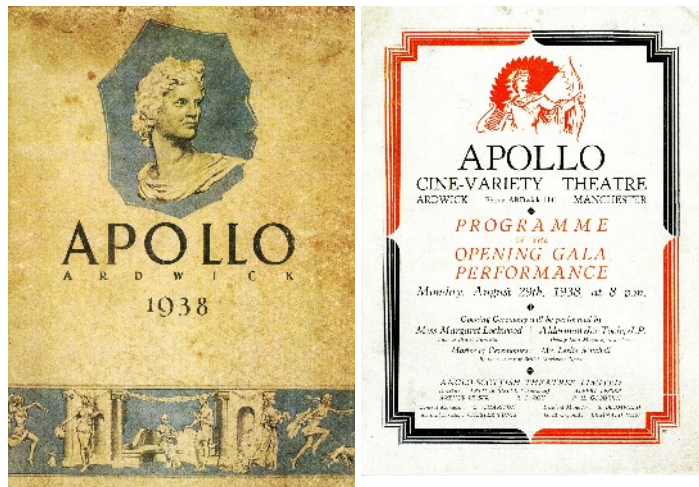
The exterior and interior of the former Adelphi Moston

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.

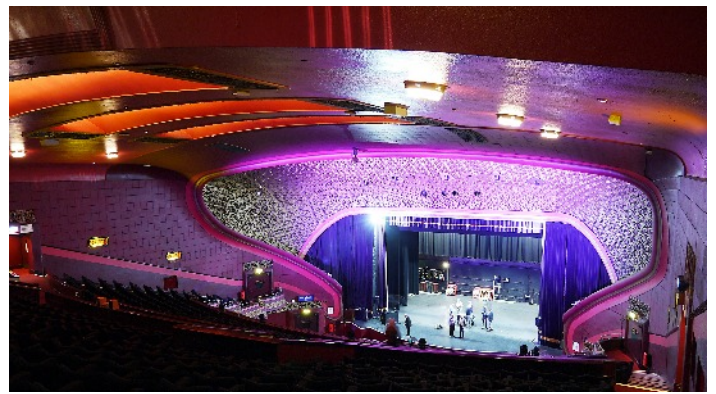
About midday, we arrived at the Apollo/ABC Ardwick (1938 Cummings & Irvine Listed Grade II) now re-branded as the O₂ apollo and operated as a live music venue by Academy Music Group for Live Nation. Built to accommodate 1,750 patrons on two levels, with some seats in the stepped balcony sideslips, it 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

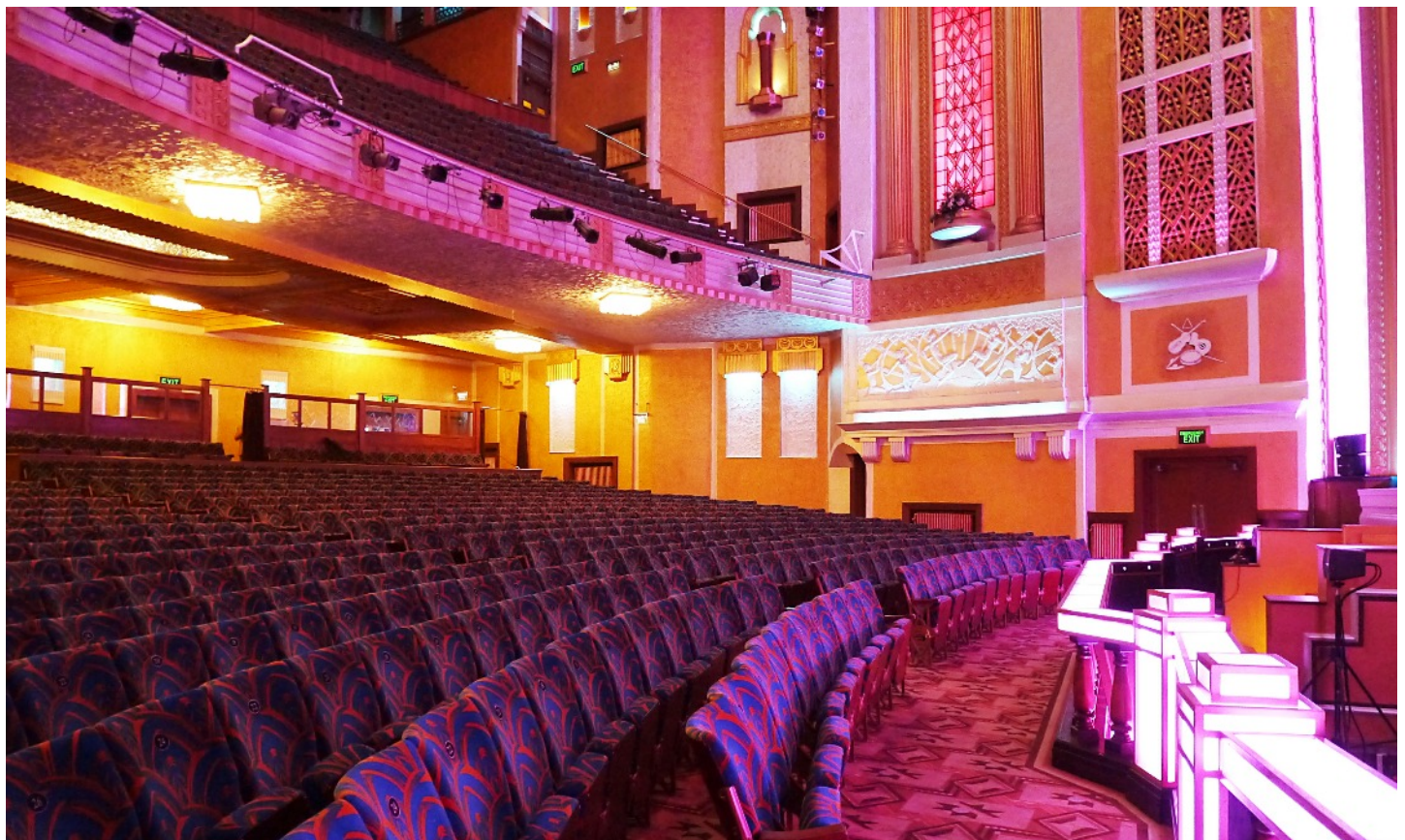
As befits an eightieth birthday, there was toast to the Apollo, which is showing all the signs of rocking and rolling towards its centenary! Thanks for a great visit to all of our hosts and staff at the venues and to David and Gary CTA North

[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

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

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.

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REDUCED PRICES

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

All available from the Sales Officer – address on p11.
please add £3.00 for postage.

BURTON UPON TRENT (Staffs)

The buffet restaurant of the Grade II listed former Ritz/Robins opened as a cat café just before Christmas [www.purrocious.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

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

**Six more pages of newsreel
in the full Bulletin**

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



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

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

Three more pages of letters
in the full Bulletin

PUBLICATIONS

Back Numbers Available

PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

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

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

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

BULLETINS

We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 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

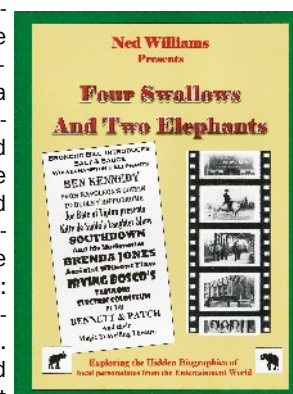
By Ned Williams, 182 pages, paperback, fully illustrated.

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.

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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