



CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

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

# BULLETIN

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The Regent Kirkby-in-Ashfield (Notts), which is now a Wetherspoons pub; photo taken May 2008



The Curzon Soho (ex Columbia) Shaftesbury Avenue, which recently celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> birthday; photo taken March 2004



## FROM YOUR EDITOR

There is a saying that Murphy's Law wasn't actually written by Murphy but by somebody else with the same name! Well, Murphy is certainly alive and well in the Bulletin Editorial Office. Despite most of the Bulletin being checked by two or three people and your editor doing a complete physical proof-read before sending it off to the printers, mistakes can still creep in. Murphy says you only notice them after you have passed the proofs onto the printers, when it is too late to change them. In the last Bulletin there were at least three errors – a redundant (greengrocer's) apostrophe, a missing word and a spelling mistake.

According to the Editorial Computer, the last Bulletin contained nearly 30,000 words with almost 178,000 characters and over 120 pictures. If just three words were wrong, that's an error rate of only 0.01% and I don't think that's too bad. Anyway, I apologise for these and hope they didn't spoil your enjoyment of the Bulletin.

Our Archive is in the process of moving from storage into new premises. I know how much work Clive, our archivist, has put into finding a suitable site and I'm sure you will join me in thanking him and all others who have helped. It will be considerably cheaper and much more convenient to have a permanent location with full facilities rather than paying for storage.

Again you have a full edition. I have been able to use much of the material I had held over. Next time there will be the third article on Bath cinemas from Ben Doman and also the visit report on the *New Screens for Old* visit to South London on 13 February and hopefully the *East is Best Part 2* visit to East London on 20 March. I also have a few small articles I'm sure I can fit in and, of course, some more holiday snaps. I have also been able to include the index to last year's Bulletins. If you would like a pdf copy of it, please email your editor.

I will almost certainly be at the AGM in London on 1 June – details opposite – so if you have any questions about the Bulletin or its production (or the health of my cat or the state of my bike) you can ask me then.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

## 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.

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE  
SATURDAY 20 APRIL**

## CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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**CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION**

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

Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor.

It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise;

items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor.

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

otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.

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

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

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## VISITS AND EVENTS

### CTA Annual General Meeting

Saturday 1 June 2019 in London

Organised by Ray Ritmeester



The Odeon Luxe Leicester Square – photo courtesy David Holt

To start the day we have been invited for a one hour tour of the Odeon Leicester Square. Resident organist Donald MacKenzie will be joining us and playing a short musical interlude on the Compton Theatre Organ, affectionately known as the 'Duchess'.

The AGM will be held at the Castle Cinema in Homerton. The meeting will feature the regular casework presentation about cases from around the UK. The CTA bookstall will also be in attendance.

### Uphill and Downhill and Into the Woods

Wednesday 12 – Friday 14 June

This three-day tour is the first CTA event to include visits in this part of Lincolnshire for over 30 years. We will be based in the City of Lincoln, after first visiting Newark, over the border in Nottinghamshire and afterwards Woodhall Spa. Lincoln has one of the most dramatic locations in England. It is a City of two halves: Uphill and Downhill, connected by streets with precipitous gradients, the most famous being the aptly named Steep Hill.



The Kinema in the Woods, Woodhall Spa

Most visits are for members only  
details in the full Bulletin

## CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

### Listing Criteria

Historic England has commissioned a comprehensive consultation exercise in order to investigate the efficacy of its strategy for listing. This represents a singular opportunity for the CTA to express its concerns, amongst which are factual inaccuracies in assessment and the apparent bias against cinemas of the 1930s, in addition to disparities in appraisal criteria from case to case. A full submission has been presented.

### Grade I Listed



The Granada Tooting in April 2004

Works additional to those required to remove vegetation from the exterior of the Granada at Tooting are apparently being undertaken. An official from the local Council is to inspect in order to assess if listed building consent should have been solicited.

### Grade II\* Listed

Objections have been submitted by the Association to a planning application to build a hotel adjacent to the Dreamland complex in Margate. The proposed structure would have a deleterious impact upon appreciation of the composition of the entertainment building's façade. See photo last Bulletin.



The Picture House Paignton in June 2008

The Trust responsible for the Picture House in Paignton is seeking to secure further finance in order to fund additional feasibility and business studies into its future operation.

More Casework in the full Bulletin



# PUBLICATIONS

## Back Numbers Available

### PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

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

No 6	£1.50	Television in the Cinema; <b>Atherley</b> Southampton; <b>Hippodrome</b> , Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; <b>ABC</b> in NW London.
No 17	£3.00	<b>Special Issue</b> featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; <b>Tivoli</b> Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; <b>Ideal</b> Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; <b>Granada</b> Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; <b>Albert Hall</b> Sheffield; <b>Regal</b> Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Committee's Choice; Gaumont Managers; <b>Carlton</b> Swansea.
No 26	£4.50	<b>Paramount</b> Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; <b>Electric</b> Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New <b>Victoria/Apollo</b> ; <b>Whiteladies</b> Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; <b>Torbay</b> Cinema; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; <b>Apollo</b> Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: <b>Essoldo</b> – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the <b>Essoldo</b> Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen: Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New <b>Victoria</b> Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	<b>Beaufort</b> Birmingham; <b>Granada</b> Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophone lighting; Imitations of <b>Odeon</b> ; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; The <b>Clifton</b> Circuit; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the <b>Electric Palace</b> Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated Cinemas; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; <b>Palace</b> Conwy; <b>Carlton</b> Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two <b>Regals</b> ; <b>Odeon</b> North Finchley; <b>Majestic</b> Oxford; Films at the <b>Royal Albert Hall</b> .
No 40	£6.00	<b>Tolmer</b> Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham – a <b>Granada</b> man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary; <b>Plaza</b> Stockport; <b>Majestic</b> Leeds; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Pascal J Stienlet.
No 42	£6.00	<b>Odeon</b> Elephant & Castle, <b>Plaza</b> Crosby; <b>Depot</b> Lewes; <b>Cineworld</b> Chelsea; Gaumont Sheffield Figures.
No 43	£6.00	Virgin Cinemas; Peter Jewett's <b>ABC</b> memories; <b>Scala</b> Kings Cross; <b>Picture House</b> Campbeltown; Beeston/Nottingham memories.

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.

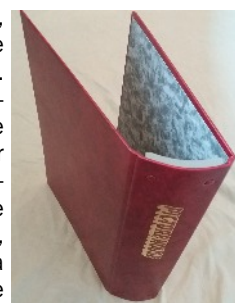
### BULLETINS

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.



### BINDERS FOR PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

These binders are to a new, revised design, which should allow easier storage for the more recent thicker copies of the magazine. The 'Wirex' system allows copies to be inserted easily and removed if required. There are twelve wires per binder, although the number of copies that can be inserted may vary depending on the thickness of the issue. The binders can also be used for the thinner, earlier copies of the magazine. Featuring a red leather-look finish and the magazine title on the spine in the current format.



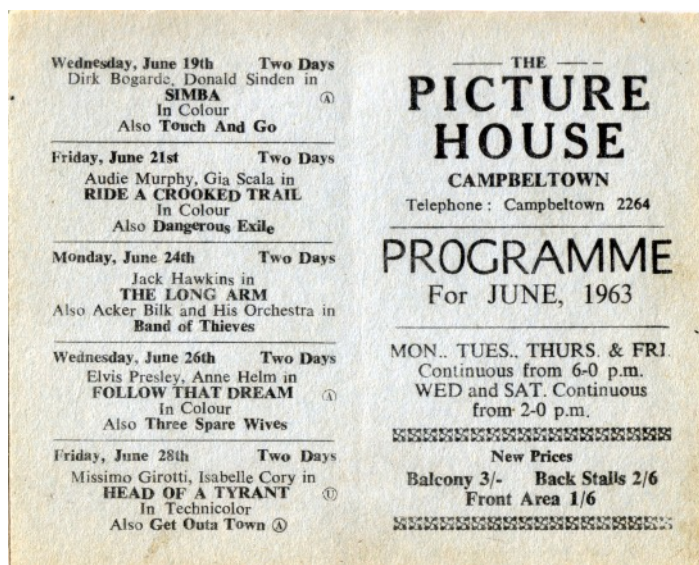
**Price:** £6.00 per binder, supplied in a special postal carton. Please add £3.00 to your total order for post and packing. Order from the Sales Officer (details below) or online (see the 'Publishing – Picture House' section of the website).

## 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.

**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 above



# UP THE NORTHERN LINE (EDGWARE BRANCH)

By Wilf Watters

This time I am off again on a nostalgia trip. Twenty one years ago I lived in Burnt Oak, near Edgware in North London. Recently I took a walk to see if any old cinemas still existed. To my surprise three out of four still do, although in a terrible condition. First one was a modest place built to serve a huge nearby Council house estate called 'Watling' after the Roman road that ran alongside. This was originally the Regent opened in 1924. It had 900 seats and a balcony was added around 1934. Then it changed to Odeon, then Gaumont then back to Odeon by 1962. But however it was demolished in 1973 when I filmed it. It was a modest affair – they didn't spend much on the frontage.



The Regent Burnt Oak in 1973



The Savoy Burnt Oak on the CTA visit in September 2006

Walking down the Edgware Road we come to the Savoy. It looks like the demolition gang have moved in. This was showing ABC programmes when I lived there but I preferred the ex Citadel at Edgware, as featured in a recent article of mine.



The Odeon/Classic Colindale in September 2006

Further down the Edgware Road, at Colindale, is a wonderful sample of the work of AP Starkey. Here was a brilliant cinema, still in a good condition although looking tatty due to dodgy businesses of the past. This was a cosy cinema too with its stadium seating and sloping side walls directing attention to the single screen. From my film, a view of the projection box with staff coping well with the huge spools then being used in the Classic days. Its future is unsure as it's surrounded by new flats and industry.



The Ambassador/ Gaumont/Classic Hendon Central in April 2006

Lastly, slipping across to Hendon Central we come to what was the Ambassador. With its prime position at a busy junction and a local Tube station it was a very popular cinema; it had opened in 1932. It became a Gaumont in 1933 then eventually a Classic in 1967. It was tripled in 1973 and is now a gym and health centre. It doesn't look very healthy to me and badly needs a paint-up. Perhaps we should be grateful that it still exists, to remind us of the many cinemas that populated our suburbs in years gone by.

Thanks to Allen Eyles for details in his first Odeon book.

*Small pictures are frames from 16mm film.*

## CIRCUIT HISTORIES AVAILABLE

### REDUCED PRICES

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

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

A MUST for your collection

## CINEMAS IN BRITAIN

A History of Cinema Architecture

by Richard Gray

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

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

Special price for CTA members

£29.50 + £6.00 postage from

Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales Officer

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



# MY YEAR WITH J ARTHUR RANK

## By Fabian Breckels

For some reason I was always fascinated with cinemas, even though my first ever visit – to the ABC Colchester to see *Swallows & Amazons* in 1974 – was not until I was seven. Thanks to a sibling deciding to throw a tantrum, it nearly never happened but once I was in the cinema, that was it. I thought, “I want one” and it was a fascination that never left me.

Most subsequent cinema trips were to the Odeon up the road, which by my mid-teens was the only cinema around. So it was that I applied for an usher's job there in the summer of 1988 and then applied to be a 'Trainee Assistant Manager' with Rank during my final year at what was then Newcastle Polytechnic. As one of the few students with a job lined up on graduation I hope I was not too smug but the job of my dreams turned out to be anything but. That said, I did manage to photograph many of the cinemas I came into contact with, which provides a bit of a snapshot of some Odeons between 1989 & 1990.

Having been interviewed by the Regional Manager for the North at the Odeon Newcastle I was somewhat surprised to be sent to the Odeon Swansea for my initial 'training'. I'd been told to expect to go north but someone, somewhere had other plans.



Odeon Swansea, Summer 1989

The Swansea Odeon was built on the site of the old Plaza and had opened on 17 May 1967. Originally the stadium auditorium had a floating screen, similar to the Odeon Elephant and Castle. The whole place was very run down, having been tripled on the cheap in 1982. Odeon ① occupied the front stalls and should have been a nice auditorium; tabs now adorned the originally bare screen but apart from that the original décor survived intact, including the hexagonal light fittings. Apart from the tatty condition of the place the effect was quite pleasing.



Odeon Swansea Screen ①

However, turn around and the story was somewhat different, with screens ② and ③ built on stilts overhanging the rear seats. Both of these were unavoidably lop-sided, despite being a decent size but what I could not believe was the ugly mess of a void between them for the projection beam. I was told that this void had forced them to reduce the size of the original screen, hence the introduction of tabs where originally there had been a floating screen.



Odeon Swansea, Screen ① rear & Screen ②

However, the sorry state of the cinema was the least of my worries. I was supposed to have left Swansea after three months, fully trained as an assistant manager. For whatever reason, that just did not happen. Colleagues seemed too busy to show me the ropes. Besides I was not finding settling into a new town that easy, the fact that I knew I was only there for a few months did not help. One thing I was starting to realise was that I just did not like being moved around at an employer's whim, something that would become a bigger issue for me as my time with Odeon progressed. Knowing that I was not there to stay meant making friends and making a life somewhere was impossible.



To views of the auditorium of the Odeon Marble Arch

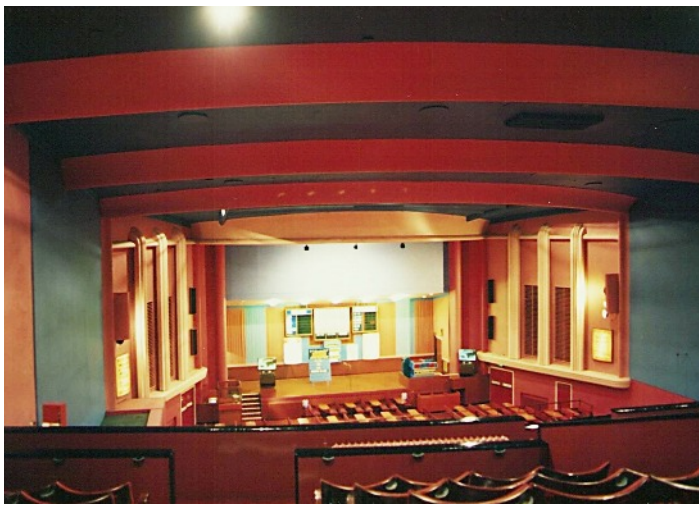
One of the advantages of being Odeon staff was the ability to visit other cinemas and get a look around. Before leaving Swansea I did manage to secure a visit to the Odeon Marble Arch, to see *Gone with the Wind*. This was before the subdivision and subsequent demolition.

On a second visit to see *The Abyss* I asked a projectionist where best to sit. He'd said in the stalls in front of the projection room. One of my lasting regrets is ignoring his advice and sitting in the front circle.



The exterior of the Maxime/Odeon Sketty, summer 1989





The interior of the Maxime/Odeon Sketty, summer 1989

While in Swansea I did secure some cheap accommodation through a contact. In effect I borrowed a whole student house while the usual tenants were on vacation. This was in Sketty, just by the Top Rank Bingo Hall. This was the former Maxime/Odeon of 1938 that had gone over to bingo in 1962. I used my Rank connections to get in to the Sketty Top Rank Club and take some photographs and thought it was a lovely place, intact and very well kept but that did not stop its closure in 1995 and subsequent demolition in 2000.

While renting and having a whole student house to myself, I nearly torched it, thanks to the usual tenant's non-pop up, pop up toaster. I'd put some toast on, nipped to the bathroom and came back minutes later to see flames through the glass kitchen door. So I just opened the back door and stuck the toaster in the garden to burn itself out. Years later a firefighter I was chatting to told me that's not what you do but at least I didn't burn the place down.

What I did do was replace the toaster but when the students returned they said they did not want it. In October 1989 I found myself transferred to the Odeon Reading, complete with a brand new toaster!

The Odeon Reading was AP Starkey's cinema of 1937, which when I arrived had just been converted from a twin to a triple. This had not stopped at simply splitting the lower screen in two. The upstairs toilets had been off a lounge that overhung the car park. This had been demolished when the car park was sold for redevelopment so the entire space above the foyer had been redesigned to provide new loos and new offices. Only screen ① survived from the original 1979 twinning.



Odeon Reading - just after the 1989 conversion to a triple exterior, screens ① and ③. The office block on the car park and lounge site is just beginning to be built.

The two new screens were soulless and I always thought the screens were far too high up. But the real loss was the void space in front of them containing the original, huge proscenium arch and the front stalls. While a colleague showed me inside it was far too dark to photograph and I recall it being full of building waste from the conversion. Why Rank did not go for an extra screen in this space I'll never know. That said, Screen ① was a really nice space to see a film in and retained a lot of the original character, although the concealed lighting had long been removed.

While I was there the Reading Odeon had its own way of operating. The manager did effectively 9 to 5 Monday to Friday, the assistants – me and one other – had to cover evenings and weekends. Perhaps there was a good reason for this but it was not my place to ask. It was at this time that they discovered I had not been fully trained at Swansea and could not be bothered to fill the gaps. In return I discovered that I was not keen on handling gangs of unruly kids (apologies if you were one of them) that turned up on Saturday afternoons.



Odeon Reading Foyer 1989 – this really is the best photo I could get

One of the 'improvements' that came with the change to three screens was the new kiosk. This dominated the foyer as it was a huge triangular wedge with the cash desks right by the doors and a walkway with bags of sweets and other items at the back. This completely carved up a foyer that had once been a spacious and welcoming place. You only have to watch the Compton Lodge Studios film of the Reading Odeon, as photographed in 1973, to see how spacious it was then compared to how cramped and overcrowded the cinema became in 1989.

Managerially the foyer was a nightmare as nobody could keep an eye on the whole foyer at any one time. This probably explains why three youths decided to rob the place after the last screening of *Roadhouse* had started upstairs. I'd wandered into the foyer around nine only to find three youths wandering around. One punched me and pinned me to the floor and said, "Stay down and you won't get hurt." while his associates raided the cash desk. The last thing I wanted was any staff getting hurt so I told them to give the robbers what they wanted. As it was they only made off with a few bags of coins and totally missed the cash drawers with the night's takings.

Just as soon as they were out of the door the Police came piling in and, whilst the robbers were never caught, I could not fault the Police for arriving so quickly, nor the front of house staff, all older ladies, for keeping so calm. Once the Police had left it was down to me to wrap things up for the night, after a very stiff drink from the manager's cupboard, used to provide refreshments at press screenings and after smoking the only cigarette I've ever actually needed.

One thing I was allowed to keep from my time at Reading was the now redundant sign pointing to the "Toilets in the Lounge", all of which had been demolished during the conversion to a triple. After years packed away it now points the way to my bathroom.



Two more pages of this article  
in the full Bulletin



# 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]

## ASHFORD (Kent)

Disabled people are finally able to access the screens in the new Picturehouse after completion of the lift installation. The six-screen cinema opened last December with all auditoria on the first floor. Report and construction time-lapse video at [tinyurl.com/ya3j2q32] {58936}

*Kent Online* – 9 January, 5 February; sent in by Philip Stevens

The Council is to spend £650,000 to convert three buildings into a temporary performance space called Coachworks. One, the former Youth Theatre, is set to be rebranded as the Hothouse. The venue will only have a five-year lifespan.

*Kent Online* – 24 December, 17 January; sent in by Philip Stevens:

*The Stage* – 4 January; sent in by Geoff Gill

The former Odeon has been ruled out as a home for a permanent theatre as the Council is in favour of a “new, modern one” and a conversion would be “too costly”. The plans are to partially demolish the building, flattening the rear of the property and knocking through the former entrance in the Lower High Street to make a pedestrian route leading to a new public square on the car park. The space – nicknamed Odeon Square – is set to feature a large outdoor cinema screen surrounded by cafes and bars. Despite looking to knock through the former cinema entrance, most of the frontage will be retained, creating an indoor performance space in the former ballroom on the first floor above the former foyer.

*Kent Online* – 15 February

## AYLESBURY (Bucks)



The bingo operation in the former Granada closed on 7 February. The building could be demolished and used as an additional entrance to a car park. The cinema opened as the Grand Pavilion in March 1925 and was rebuilt in 1936. It became the Granada in November 1946 and was so renamed the following year. Films ceased in October 1972. A petition to save it has been started. {33269}

*Mix 96* – 15 January; sent in by Martin Tapsell (photos)

**Martin Tapsell writes:** Just for the record, the Gala Club on its penultimate night, 6 February. Note unlit lettering. I was told there may not be any meals available before the 6:45 session but I could nip up to MacDonald's. I walked round the auditorium, empty apart from five women at the back. I'd bought one £2 flyer but “forgot” to come back to play and later the lady bingo player providing breakfast at my Travelodge confirmed there had been no meals for a while. The receptionist implied more Galas not rebranded Buzz might be down for closure soon but nothing found online to confirm. Noted a woman smoking on the steps to High Street, probably finding that preferable to the draughty lean-to Gala provided through a door near the stage.

## BARNESLEY (South Yorks)

A new thirteen-screen Cineworld is to be part of the Glass Works development. It will have around 2,500 seats and a selection of formats, including a super-screen, moving seats and curved surround screens. The site is close to the existing two-screen Parkway (ex Odeon).

*Yorkshire Post* – 17 December

## BELFAST



It has been confirmed that the ten-screen Movie House will close at the end of May. Michael McAdam, Movie House Cinemas' managing director, said: “We've been trading at Dublin Road for twelve years but recently we've seen a big shift in cinema attendance out of Belfast City centre to suburban cinemas, which offer free parking.” It has been sold to a software developer, who will redevelop the site.

*Belfast Telegraph* – 12 February; *News Letter* – 13 February; photo taken September 2014

## BIRKENHEAD (Wirral)

Wirral Borough Council is planning to update the centre of Birkenhead. It has bought the seven-screen 1,756-seat Vue for £7.1m – it will probably be demolished in the long term, along with the nearby Mecca bingo hall. The cinema in the Town Hall is the last venue on the Wirral where 35mm films can be shown. It is maintained by the Projected Picture Trust [PPT].

*Wirral Globe* – 12 February; *Liverpool Echo* – 15 February; also sent in by Mike Taylor

## BLACKBURN (Lancs)

A computer generated walk-through of the former Cotton Exchange has been released by its trustees, who plan to spend £6m on bringing the 1885 building back into use as an arts, culture and events venue. It was a cinema from 1918 until 2005, when it closed as the five-screen Apollo. The building is Grade II listed. There are photos and a history on the website at [exchangeblackburn.org.uk] {24035}

*Lancashire Telegraph* – 11 February; sent in by Philip Crompton

## BLACKPOOL (Lancs)



The Regent has installed a 35mm projector with the help of the PPT. The venue uses 124 seats in the circle of the Grade II listed building; the ground floor is used as an antiques emporium. {6549}

*The Gazette, Blackpool* – 28 January; photo taken June 2009

## BODMIN (Cornwall)

Merlin Cinemas has confirmed it will open a cinema in the former Public Rooms this year. The town's last cinema, the Palace, closed 40 years ago.

*Cornwall Live* – 16 January



### BRADFORD (West Yorks)

The cost of converting the former New Victoria / Odeon into a 3,800-seat performance venue has risen from the initial £15.6m to £22.7m. A decision on the planning application was expected from the Council in March. The venue is due to open in autumn 2020. {3677}

*Telegraph & Argus – 5 January*

### BRIGHTON

The developer has revealed plans for the Grade II\* listed Hippodrome. They include restoration and refurbishment of the theatre and include a 74-room hotel with spa and 26 apartments. In the first phase, a steel structure will be built to prop up the existing dome and façade to provide support to the building. {36884}

*Brighton & Hove Independent – 25 January, 1 February;  
The Stage – 7 February; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### BRISTOL

A £50m regeneration of East Street in Bedminster could see a new three-screen cinema built into a refurbished shopping centre. A number of plans have already been submitted; one plan involves Scott Cinemas, who operate the Orpheus cinema in Henleaze, to run the new cinema.

*Bristol Live – 15 February*

### BROADSTAIRS (Kent)

The ten-screen Vue at Westwood Cross was evacuated as a precaution about 1:30pm on 27 January after a customer thought they smelt smoke and raised the alarm. Two fire engines and an ambulance were seen at the cinema. Firefighters found no evidence of a blaze and left at 1:50pm. {25824}

*Thanet Gazette – 1 February; sent in by Margaret Burgoine*

### BRODICK (Isle of Arran)

Plans have been approved to turn a former ferry terminal into a two-screen cinema. The auditoria will have 55 seats each and be equipped with laser digital projectors and a Dolby sound system. The proposal is for the cinema to be open from 12pm to 9pm seven days a week, showing latest releases and satellite relays. Opening was announced for Easter 2019.

*Ardrossan & Saltcoats Herald – 30 November*

### BUILTH WELLS (Powys)



The two-screen Wyese Arts Centre is to undergo a £5m redevelopment. The current 183-seat screen will be split into two auditoria of 77 and 75 seats. The venue plans to continue running a programme of 'off-site' activities for the duration of the 12 to 18 month building period, looking instead at using alternative venues. There is no mention of the current second screen, which seats 150.

*Powys County Times – 7 February; photo taken May 2013*

### CAMBRIDGE

The Wetherspoons pub in the former Tivoli was gutted by fire in 2015. According to the architects, the building's skeletal structure remains intact. The art deco style frontage also survived but everything else was destroyed, including the roofs. Now another company has plans to bring the building back into use as a pub again. Customers will have a choice of food from several rotating street food vendors. Among the plans are a roof terrace, a basement shuffleboard course and a crazy golf course. A multi-purpose event space could be used for film screenings as it will be equipped with projection equipment and space for 80 seats.

*Cambridgeshire Live – 7 December, 21 January*

### CLITHEROE (Lancs)

Everyman has confirmed it will operate a new four-screen cinema at Holmes Mill. It is hoped to be open before the end of the year.

*Lancashire Telegraph – 21 January; sent in by Philip Crompton;  
Clitheroe Advertiser and Times – 24 January; sent in by Joseph E Roberts*

### CROMARTY (Highland)

The Cromarty and Resolis Film Society has now gained complete funding for a £240,000 cinema and construction is expected to start in March.

*Press & Journal, Aberdeen – 26 December*

### CUMBERNAULD (North Lanark)

The owner of The Centre has drawn up plans for a new cinema and restaurant complex. It will include a 'Tier 1' eight-screen cinema with 1,168 seats and be located on what is currently the car park for the Teviot Walk Mall. Discussions are said to be taking place with potential operators.

*Cumbernauld News – 1 February*

### DAVENTRY (Northants)

The Council has approved plans for a four-screen cinema on the library site. It would have two 100-seat screens, one 120-seat screen and one 160-seat screen to accommodate a total of 500 patrons. As reported in the last Bulletin, costs have risen from £8.2m to £12.3m. Work will start in May, after the library has relocated.

*East Midlands Business Link – 13 February; Insider Media – 22 February*

### DEAL (Kent)

A fresh planning application has been submitted for the Regent after previous plans were withdrawn in 2014. This time a two-screen cinema seating 200 is proposed, together with an adjoining restaurant. If approved, a 12-month regeneration programme will begin with a view to opening in 2020. Three of the four existing walls are to be retained, including the Art Deco façade and original dome, which will be recovered and painted bottle green – the colours of the original cinema. The developers say these walls would be strengthened and rendered. The only wall to be demolished is the south side of the building facing the Timeball Tower, where steelwork has rotted. The upper windows would remain the same size but the ground floor windows would be enlarged to increase the sea view for customers. The Reopen the Regent group described the plans as "eminently sensible and achievable". The Town Council has raised no objection to the plans. {32928}

*Kent Online – 3, 10 January, 8 February; sent in by Martin Tapsell;*

### DEREHAM (NORFOLK)



The three-screen Hollywood cinema has been sold, as the chain went into administration. The new owner is the operator of the Orion cinema in Burgess Hill, West Sussex. The Dereham venue will remain open during the transition period and all eight members of staff will keep their jobs. {24664} Photo taken July 2007.

*Eastern Daily Press – 7 February; sent in by John Popey & Les Woods*

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



# REWINDING BACK

Sent in by David A Ellis

## NEWCASTLE OPENING

Newcastle's latest cinema, the **Essoldo**, built on the site of an old police station in Westgate Road, was opened on Monday by the Lord Mayor of the City, Alderman Gilbert Oliver. The **Essoldo**, the first cinema built in Newcastle by Essoldo Theatres Ltd, is designed on the most modern lines and contains new features. The walls are panelled with Vitrolite and a stage is provided, suitable for dramatic performances. The seating capacity is 2,000. The building has been designed by Mr W Stockdale of North Shields and the contractor Mr Hastie Burton of Tynemouth.

*Cinematograph Times – 1 September 1938*

## ORGANIST MOVES

Cecil Chadwick, who for nearly a year has been the organist at the **Savoy** cinema, Leicester (ABC) is leaving to take up a similar post at the **Paramount Theatre** Leeds. While at the **Classic** cinema, Belfast, he broadcast over 200 times and he made fifteen broadcasts while touring for the Union Company.

*Cinematograph Times – 1 September 1938*

## FIRST CINEMA REOPENING

The following historic notice has been issued in Aberystwyth to all proprietors of local cinemas:

I am prepared to allow your place of entertainment to continue business from day to day if the following conditions are properly complied with:

1. That you arrange for an operator to listen for air raid warnings during the whole period that an entertainment takes place.
2. That all exits are properly cleared.
3. That you arrange sufficient staff to prevent panic in the case of an air raid warning; and
4. That you indicate in large type throughout your theatre the nearest available air raid shelter, together with instructions to the public on how they should get there.

You will appreciate that I am anxious to allow normal business to continue and I expect the owners of theatres to assist me in not only carrying out the legal aspect of these regulations but also their spirit. I would further add that this is a temporary licence, which may have to be cancelled at short notice.

(Signed) ED Evans DCC for Chief Constable

*The Era – Thursday 7 September 1939*

## TAYLOR, TAYLOR & HOBSON, LTD

It is of interest to note that Taylor-Hobson kinema projection lenses have been selected by the British Admiralty for use with GB Projectors on battleships. Of particular interest during the past year were the developments by this firm for television projection in cinema theatres. 12½in lenses with an aperture of f/2 and also f/1.5 were used for the projection of televised pictures for the Derby and several other outstanding events. These large aperture lenses, with their comparatively wide angle of covering power, represent big advance in lens design for projection. As in past years, some of the largest theatres that have been opened during the course of the year have been installed with Taylor-Hobson lenses.

*Kine Year Book – 1940*

## SIMPLEX EQUIPMENT: J FRANK BROCKLISS LTD

Following their yearly tradition of adding something new to their well-known Simplex equipment, Brockliss, in 1939, have introduced an entirely new Simplex model, which is the first that the International Projector Corporation of New York have ever made, apart from the essential principles of the Simplex as it has been known since its inception. It is, however, found that a big number of those controlling small houses were not in a position to pay the price required for the super equipment, and consequently the new Simplex projector known as the SI has been evolved for the needs of kinemas seating up to 800 people. Although this is a model for medium-sized theatres, this projector has the unique feature of having synchronised shutters, both front and rear. The projector offers simplicity, ease of operation and the ability to provide good projection.

*Kine Year Book – 1940*

## DEATH IN A CINEMA



The Ritz Warrington; photo courtesy dusashenka

A verdict that he died from a fracture to the base of the skull, with insufficient evidence to show how, was returned today on William Hayward, aged 39, of Welling, Kent but lodging at 148 Wilderspool Road, Warrington. Jennie Hayward, his wife, said they had visited the Ritz cinema on Wednesday evening and, during the showing of a blood transfusion film, her husband put his hand to his head and said, "I won't be a minute." He did not return and after fifteen minutes she got help; he was found in the toilet room with a wound in his head. Mr TS Steel Jun, for the Ritz proprietors and the coroner, Mr AV Cuncliffe, both said they could not believe that the film had anything to do with it. He might have slipped on a step.

*Liverpool Echo – 9 June 1941*

## BIRMINGHAM PARAMOUNT BECOMES AN ODEON

The **Paramount Theatre**, a popular Birmingham cinema, will on Sunday become an Odeon. The Odeon organisation, of which Mr J Arthur Rank is the head, was found in Birmingham. It controls over 300 cinemas in Great Britain. Mr Leslie Holderness will remain manager with Mr K Charles Chisman, formerly of the **Astoria** Finsbury Park (London) as his assistant.

*Evening Despatch – Friday 28 August 1942*

## ANOTHER CINEMA TO CLOSE

Another of Belfast's privately-owned cinemas is shutting down. The **West End Picture House** opened on the Shankill Road in October 1913 and will close its doors for the last time on 2 July. "We can't compete any more with television and the growth of motoring and outside sport." Said a representative of the cinema today. "People's habits are changing and a night out at the cinema doesn't mean the same as it did. Independent owners haven't a chance today."

The **West End** was originally opened by Messrs Joseph McKibbin, Andrew Craig and Henry A Newell and has been in the Craig and Newell families ever since. Three cinemas owned by the McKibbin estate have already gone out of business – the **Midland** York Street, bombed during the war; the **Shankill Picturedrome** closed two years ago and the **Diamond** in Falls Road closed last year.

Footnote: When it was opened, the prices at the **West End** cinema were 2d and 4d. Today they are 1s and 1s/6d.

*Belfast Telegraph – 16 May 1960*

## BABY SITTING SERVICE AT CINEMA

Starting tomorrow and continuing every Saturday until Christmas, the **Classic** cinema in Foregate Steet, Chester, is to have a baby-sitting service during the afternoon. Manageress Mrs M Royle said that mothers going shopping could leave their children at the cinema for 2½ hours for 2s/6d. "We will be showing cartoon films for the children and very young babies will be looked after by myself and my assistant. All the children will be looked after by trained staff," she said.

*Cheshire Observer – 14 November 1969*



# LETTERS

## AGE CONCERN

Fabian Breckels made a good case in the last Bulletin for all certificate ratings for movies to be advisory; thus relieving pressure on cinemas who could lose their licence if underage patrons are discovered watching a film they shouldn't be. Fabian correctly points out that those underage movie-goers are easily able to watch any film they want, whatever the certificate, in the comfort of their own home. And that being the case, should cinemas be punished for something that they might not be at fault for?

Certification has always been a thorny issue. I've watched many movies that, in my opinion, should have had their ratings lowered or even raised. At the time of writing my two favourite current releases are *The Mule* and *Green Book*. *The Mule*, Clint Eastwood's latest masterpiece, is a [15] rating while *Green Book*, starring Viggo Mortensen and Mahershala Ali and which I reckon contains a touch more violence and bad language, is only a [12A] certificate. It didn't bother me that Clint's film was rated [15], I just don't understand why.

If parents want to ignore guidelines in their own home, that's fine. But a cinema is a public place and for that reason alone ratings do have a use and probably should still be enforced – even if it means a cinema losing its licence. Also, from a purely selfish point of view, most serious films carry higher ratings, which means I can enjoy the type of film I really like without being disturbed by bored youngsters who simply don't get the nuances of the story.

Fabian also wrote that he once turned a mother and a baby away from a [15] certificate film at the Odeon Reading. This reminded me of a similar instance at the ABC Portsmouth in 1992. We were showing the [15] rated Brian De Palma thriller *Raising Cain* starring John Lithgow and Lolita Davidovich. One midweek afternoon a young couple with a babe in arms turned up wanting to watch the film. Those of us on the front-of-house refused them entry but when the duty manager was called she allowed them in. There was, shall we say, a very heated discussion between the duty manager and the rest of us and the atmosphere in the cinema was somewhat tense for some days after.

Mike Whitcombe

## ENDLESS BOX-OFFICE RECORDS

Our editor pointed out in Bulletin 52/6 how rises in ticket prices make continuous excited claims of new record movie earnings rather meaningless. I've followed this up a bit; the problem goes back over many years, with movies that had enormous audiences having unadjusted grosses dwarfed by later films. The *Guinness Book of Records* has attempted to tackle this by trying to adjust for inflation; this is discussed along with other complicating factors such as exchange rates and differential pricing for the likes of road-shows and 3D presentations in a very useful Wikipedia article at [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\_of\_highest-grossing\_films]. With a number of Health Warnings, the Wikipedia article comes up with this Top Ten all-time Highest Grossing Films, adjusted for inflation, as at 2017:

1. *Gone with the Wind* (1939)
2. *Avatar* (2009)
3. *Titanic* (1997)
4. *Star Wars* (1977)
5. *The Sound of Music* (1965)
6. *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* (1982)
7. *The Ten Commandments* (1956)
8. *Doctor Zhivago* (1965)
9. *Jaws* (1975)
10. *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* (2015)

Jeremy Perkins

## LIVERPOOL BIRTHDAYS

Both of the following will be 80 years old this year. The Abbey Waver-tree opened on 4 March with 1,870 seats. In 1964 it was converted for Cinerama but closed in August 1979. The stalls area was converted into a supermarket. The outside looks exactly the same as it did in 1939. The Plaza community cinema in Crosby had the distinction of opening and closing on the same day – 2 September 1939. When WWII was declared all places of entertainment were closed by the government but this order was rescinded after a few weeks.

Mike Taylor

## BATH AND CHIPPENHAM



The Astoria Chippenham soon after opening and the Upper Foyer today

Just to amend a small item in Ben Doman's excellent article on the Oldfield Picture House Bath – where he says that on 28 September 1945 Emanuel Harris moved on to build the Astoria Chippenham; in fact the Astoria had opened on 22 May 1939. Mr Harris had moved his family into Chippenham at the outbreak of war to avoid the bombing on Bristol and Bath.

On that note the Astoria will be 80 years old in May this year. It now fully operational as a five-screen cinema. I am pleased to report that the end result is pleasingly good! The suspended ceiling in the upstairs foyer (installed in 1967 by Star) has been removed to expose some original plasterwork and the upper part of the windows; the ceiling was just above the tops of the doors so it gives an idea of how much was covered up! Overall the quality of the refurbishment is very good and you can see where the reputed cost of £2m has been spent. I hope to do a more detailed story on the Astoria and, from my home town of Calne, the history of the Palace/Regent cinema where I was taught to be a projectionist.

David Reeves

## RANK REMEMBERED

In the last Bulletin Tim McCullen remembered a visit to The Rank Organisation's offices in Godstone Road, Whyteleafe. I thought it might be of interest to members to know a little more about the history of the building. John Davis, Rank Chairman, decided that he wanted to centralise the company's various businesses. He did this by bringing all the senior managements and heads of operations into a large office block in Victoria, London at 11 Belgrave Road. All the support services such as Technical Services, accounting and personnel were grouped in the much less-costly Godstone Road building.

I worked there for a time when it was fully occupied and a hive of activity. It was where I encountered my first 'main frame' IBM computer, which had its own air-conditioned room with banks of spinning tapes. Outside was a team of women punching cards to input data. It was the time of miniskirts and the girls in the typing pool (memories...) vied to see who had the shortest skirt. As the building was nowhere near any facilities it had its own canteen with a grill counter at one end, if you could afford the extra cost. Odeon and Top Rank Club were among the divisions based there. As Rank as a company changed, the building steadily emptied and for a time had non-Rank tenants. The last time I passed it was empty and abandoned with broken windows. It was sad to see so I am glad it has been replaced by a something new.

Tony Williams

Tim McCullen writes: When I went there (two occasions) I was offered the canteen – lack of money kept me from going; I would have gone there today though. It's sad to hear that the building became derelict as I remember it being a buzzing place. Such office space would be unsuitable in today's world, hence it probably got demolished. Any idea when it opened and Rank finally went from there? Wonder what happened to the people who I met there?

## INFORMATION WANTED AND FOUND

Following my request on p27 of Bulletin 52/5, where I asked if anyone knew the titles of the music used on the *Talking Pictures* TV channel, I have now found out three pieces that they use between films: *Jaunty Jape*, *Glitzzy Affair* and *Opening Night*. They all come from the Carlin Music Library (Warner Chappell) and can be heard on-line [search2.warnerchappellpm.com/main]. The other pieces of music I haven't been able to track down yet.

John R Forster

More letters in the full Bulletin



# BOGNOR FINALLY GETS A FOURTH SCREEN

By Mike Whitcombe



The eagerly awaited and much delayed fourth screen at the Picturedrome Bognor Regis, has finally opened. The latest addition to the Victorian-built cinema showed its first film to the general public at 1pm on Friday 21 December 2018 when the Benedict Cumberbatch voiced *The Grinch* was screened. The fourth screen, officially called Screen ② (auditoria are numbered in relation to capacity), boasts 102 black leather seats in a stadium design. It's located in a newly-built addition to the building that occupies what was once the cinema's rear car park. Access to the screen is still through the main foyer, from where you take a newly-constructed corridor that runs along what used to be the rear of Screen ①. New toilets, including a disabled toilet, along with another confectionery stand, have been added at the end of the corridor from where you turn right to enter the auditorium.

The Picturedrome is owned by Bognor Regis Town Council and operated by Adam Cunard's Picturedrome Electric Theatre Company. Plans were passed for the construction of this latest screen as long ago as 2015. But a dispute with a local resident over access to the site and the election of new town councillors who disagreed with the Council extending the operator a twenty-five year loan to construct the building that would house the auditorium caused the scheme to stall. It wasn't until a public outcry and much debate in Council corridors that approval was finally given. On 24 April 2017, by a vote of nine to one, councillors finally authorised a loan of £965,823.

Construction began on 26 June 2017 and was expected to be completed by April 2018 at the latest. But several unexpected setbacks kept pushing the opening date back. These included the repositioning of an exit door when it was realised it would interfere with the screen and additional planning permission for the seating layout when it was decided to realign the seats to make access better. By the end of August 2018 the auditorium was ready for opening. But when safety checks were carried out several concerns were raised. These were gradually resolved until checks on the lining material used to sound-proof the side walls caused another opening date delay. These concerns took longer to rectify and it was expected the screen would not open until early 2019. But with five days remaining until Christmas, management were given less than twenty four hours' notice to open the screen. As the Christmas schedule was already confirmed and booked, the new screen was mainly used as a much needed festive overflow for sold-out houses of *Mary Poppins Returns* until specific booking for Screen ② started at the beginning of the New Year.



"I'm pleased we have finally been able to open the fourth screen at the Picturedrome," said managing director Adam Cunard, who operates nineteen screens at six sites. "Having the additional screen will enable us to show more films than ever before to provide residents of the Bognor Regis area and beyond with additional choice. We hope our regular audiences will enjoy the comfort of the modern surroundings of the new screen and they will be joined by those yet to experience the latest technology in our historic building."

## HOLIDAY SNAPS



The Sklavija Kino in Vilnius, Lithuania {18071}

Opened in 1992

1 screen, 141 seats

programmed by Media (part of the Europa Cinema group)

Sent in by Anthony Wills



The Princess Theatre Launceston, Tasmania {53674}

Opened as a cinema August 1911, 1,079 seats

Films ceased 1970, building purchased by local Council

Live theatre use since

Sent in by Anthony Wills