



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

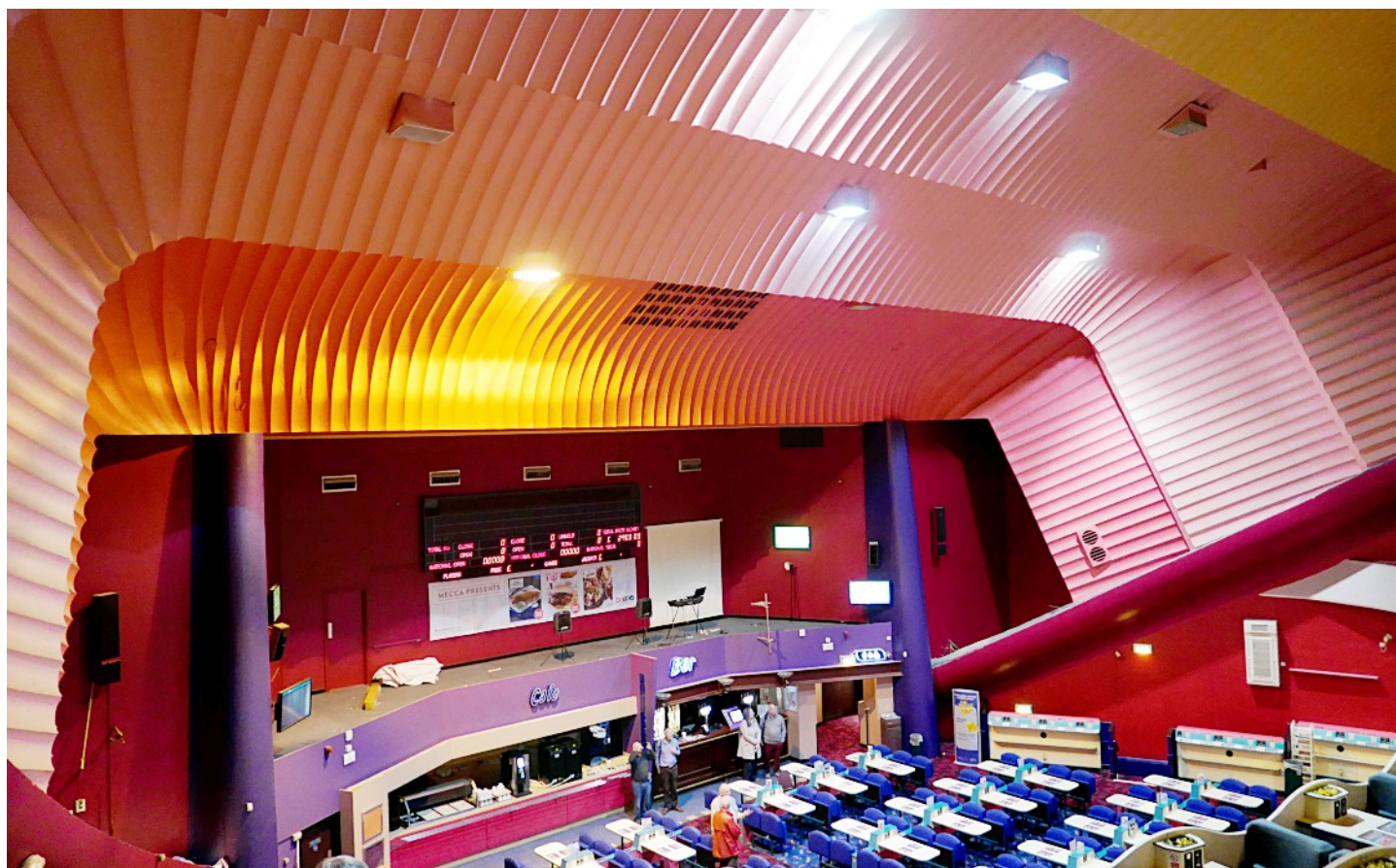
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BULLETIN

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November / December 2019



The exterior and interior of the former Gaumont Rose Hill, visited by the CTA on 7 September – see visit report p8

FROM YOUR EDITOR



Many thanks to all of you who wished us a good holiday and welcomed us back on our return. It was a delightful month in Germany and Austria – pretty much the same as last year so I won't bore you with the details. We visited Wagner's Festspielhaus [Opera House] in Bayreuth – quite spectacular but they wouldn't allow photographs inside. We came across a couple of operating cinemas. Above is the Stadtkino in Hallein, twelve miles south of Salzburg; we cycled there on the banks of the river Salzach.



Soon after we got back, we visited my sister in Morecambe. At the Midland Hotel they were having a Vintage Weekend. The Vintage Mobile Cinema was there doing good 'business' [for donations] with 10-minute short presentations. It was an experience to go inside and see the machine working, albeit digital and not the original 16mm. Apparently they have found the original trailer that went with this only surviving example and it is being restored.
[www.vintagemobilecinema.co.uk]

In *Rewinding Back* on p16 there is an account of a fire at the Regent Brighton in 1929. It tells of the efficiency of the staff and how the cinema was evacuated quickly and without panic. Contrast this with the report on p20 of a suspected fire in 2019 at the Cineworld in Glasgow. Patrons complained that nobody on the staff knew what to do. I can relate to this. We were in Sainsbury's last week when their fire alarm went off. Some staff told us to clear the building, others said we need not do so, others told us just to move to the front of the store, others were running around like headless chickens. Luckily it turned out to be a false alarm. I assumed all large buildings like shops and cinemas had a policy in place and thoroughly trained their staff for such an eventuality. Obviously I'm wrong.

To keep this edition to a multiple of four pages, I have had to hold over a few items that I have been sent. I have kept them all and will try to include them in future editions. A couple relate to WWII so they will be very relevant to next year, the 75th anniversary of the end of hostilities. Perhaps you have stories you could add on this theme?

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE FRIDAY 20 DECEMBER

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

Company limited by guarantee. Reg. No. 04428776.

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise; items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor.

Please state if you require items to be returned and enclose SAE, otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.

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

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

Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby

Printed by The Ludo Press Ltd, 18 Wimbledon Stadium Business Centre, Riverside Road, London, SW17 0BA [www.ludo.co.uk]

VISITS AND EVENTS

The other BBC – a visit to Bromley, Bellingham & Catford

Monday 25 November

Organised by Kevin Gooding

For many years London's largest Borough was deprived of cinema screens. Not anymore. In the last year a new nine-screen luxury Vue has opened in St Mark's Square at Bromley South along with a major restoration to the former Empire in the High Street, originally a 1938 'George Coles' Odeon, now a Picturehouse.



Our first visit will start at 9:45 at the Vue [pictured above] located in St Mark's Square opposite Bromley South Station. Across the road from the station, walk down the side of the Richmal Crompton Wetherspoons and through a passage way, where you will see the entrance to the Vue. We will get a chance to see as many screens as possible before they commence their daily film program.

We then walk through Bromley town centre, taking in sites of former cinemas, arriving at the newly restored Picturehouse. It is now a six-screen complex with two brand new screens; one on the roof of the foyer block, the other on the roof of the new café bar. The original four screens have been carefully restored and enhanced with larger screens and new seats. After our tour refreshments will be available in the large café bar.

On leaving the Picturehouse we will take a local bus to Bellingham, where we will see the Bellingham Film Palace. This is a new 78-seat cinema located in the historic Fellowship Inn pub house. Finally, taking another short bus ride to Catford, we visit the Catford Mews cinema, a brand new independent three-screen complex located in the former Poundland store.

Unfortunately we have had to start the visit early as we are visiting two working cinemas. For people travelling from outside London there is a Premier Inn opposite the Vue in St Mark's square along with a Travelodge in Bromley Town Centre.

Cost of the visit is £8, payable on the day, which includes visit notes and light refreshments. Please register your interest on the visits and events phone number 020 8800 8383, leaving your name and a contact number.

A Christmas Celebration in the West End

Friday 13 December at 6:30pm

Organised by Richard Gray & Ray Ritmeester

During the evening there will be an opportunity to view the main auditorium [between shows].

As a way of celebrating the CTA's successful application for the listing of the Empire Haymarket, in the West End – albeit somewhat belatedly, as it was achieved towards the end of last year – we are holding a Christmas party in the cinema by kind permission of the manager. It will be held in the ground floor bar just off the main foyer.

The Empire originally opened as the Carlton in 1927, at first as a live theatre but very quickly went over to films, from which it has never reverted. Paramount Pictures had an involvement as their 'mountain' trademark appears twice in stone on the façade. The architects were Frank Verity and Samuel Beverly, who had previously been responsible for the Plaza, the studio's British flagship cinema around the corner in Regent Street.



The Empire Haymarket; photo taken August 2018

The Carlton's internal decorative style is an elegant Robert Adam classical for the foyer, combined with Italian Renaissance for the auditorium. Operation transferred from Paramount to Twentieth Century-Fox in the late 1950s and, on giving up film exhibition in Britain twenty year later, the cinema passed through various hands until being acquired by Empire (Ward Anderson). During this period the auditorium was subdivided, making listing protracted but in the end Historic England realised that enough survived of the original building for a Grade II status to be awarded.

Our Christmas parties have a reputation and tradition of being great fun. Wine or soft drinks and canapés will be served. Tickets at £12.00 are available in advance from: Richard Gray, 45 Arnold Road, London, E3 4NU. Please enclose an SAE (I know this seems dreadfully old fashioned but it still works!) with cheques made out to The Cinema Theatre Association. Please send applications by 6 December.

Getting There: Approaching from Piccadilly Circus, the Empire is half-way down the right-hand side of Haymarket. Piccadilly Circus is on the Piccadilly and Bakerloo tube lines.

Members' Slide Show & Social Evening

Saturday 11 January at 5:30pm (doors open 5pm)

Organised by Richard Norman

Our usual members' slide show evening returns in January after last year's Christmas variation to the theme.



The programme will be prearranged to provide an evening of interesting (and entertaining!) members' slides and videos. Now that we're in the digital age, members are invited to show us anything of cinema-related interest. This can include personal items, press items, mementos or something that you've seen on the Internet. If you would like to provide or suggest something, please contact:

Richard Norman. Tel: 020 8668 6077
or email: [RichardNormanCTA@aol.com].

Admission on the door: £10 (including wine, soft drinks and light refreshments). Members and non-members welcome.

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

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

Picturedrome Bognor in its 100th Year

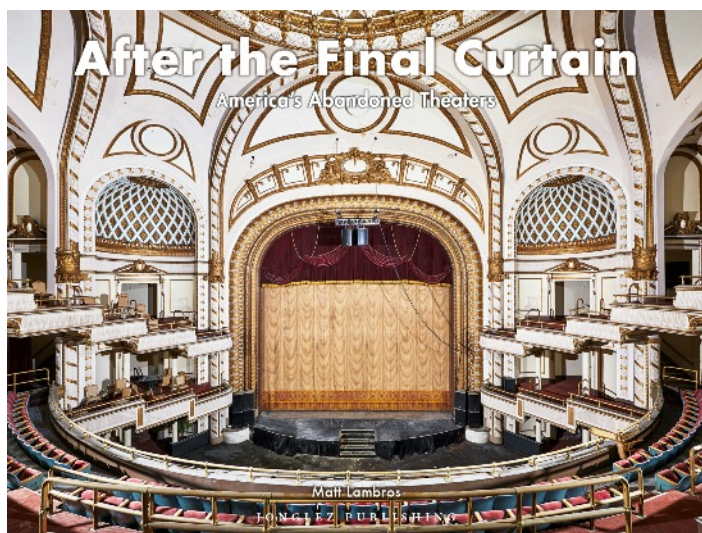


I have been approached by the Picturedrome Operations Manager Spencer Clark to help them celebrate the Picturedrome’s centenary. Although the actual birthday has passed, Operator Adam Cunard was keen not to let this milestone pass and there will be events planned for Friday 17 January with a period film show and an exhibition of cinema memorabilia. At the moment the planning is on-going and the film and the events are still being selected by the management team. In order to publicise the event and secure seats for the CTA on the evening of 17 January, this trailer is being advertised in this final Bulletin of 2019. The Picturedrome is a wonderful period cinema and extra screens have been added recently in keeping with its historic listed status.

For more information as to what’s planned please send SAE to: David Eve, CTA Wessex, Far Ends, 28 Courtenay Road, Lower Parkstone, BH14 0HD. Please include your email address and telephone number for updates. It will be the start of December before I will be in touch.

Coming Soon

After the Final Curtain 2: America’s Abandoned Theaters – Illustrated talk by Matt Lambros
Saturday 22 February; The Gallery, 5:30pm (doors open 5pm)



In the first of what we hope to be a short series of events featuring international guest speakers, the CTA welcomes back noted cinema theatre photographer Matt Lambros from the USA, who splendidly entertained a ‘full house’ in February 2018 with interior images he had taken of long closed movie theatres in the USA, which were featured in his book *After the Final Curtain – The Fall of the American Movie Theater*. The quality of the images were truly amazing and we were stunned by his ability to photograph the beauty of dereliction in such difficult circumstances, while Matt gave running comments on his exploits and adventures gaining access into theatre buildings that had been abandoned for decades.

Matt’s book was so successful he has released *After the Final Curtain: America’s Abandoned Theaters*, copies of which will be available for sale to CTA members on the evening. Come early to grab your seat for another evening of images of what remains after the last ticket was sold.

Venue: The Gallery, at Alan Baxter Associates, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London, EC1M 6EL (see opposite for travel directions)

Admittance: £10 on the door. Guests welcome (includes wine and light refreshments)

CTA Bookstall: The CTA Bookstall will be at the event. Limited copies of Matts book will be on sale and available for signing.

The photograph on the cover of Matt’s new book is the 2,000-seat Orpheum Theatre, St. Louis, Missouri (architect G Albert Lansburgh – 1917)

Other Events of Interest [not organised by the CTA]

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

THE PLAZA STOCKPORT

Friday 17 January *Tell It To The Bees* (2018) [15] 11am & 7:30pm
Saturday 25 January Organ Coffee Morning 10am admission free
The Current War (2017) [12A] 3pm
Fritz Lang’s Metropolis (1927) [PG] 7:30pm

Behind the Scenes Tour at 11am on Monday 27 January.

£8. Book or simply turn up.

Box Office: 0161 477 7779; website [www.stockportplaza.co.uk]

THE REGAL EXPERIENCE, WYMONDHAM

8 December *Annie Get Your Gun* (1951) [U] plus
Happy Holiday Bing Crosby & Frank Sinatra

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

Further information from Michael Armstrong [01953 603246]

THE FECKENODEON Worcestershire, B96 6HN

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

30 November *Bohemian Rhapsody* (2018) [15]

28 December *The Maggie* (1954) [U] plus

The Ghost of St Michaels (1941) [U]

25 January *All Is True* (2018) [PG]

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

REGENT CHRISTCHURCH CINEMA MUSEUM OPEN DAYS

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

Tickets: £5 per person. [tinyurl.com/y9c5r62m] or 01202 499199.

Spaces are limited to 8 per tour – book now to avoid disappointment!

Aborted Project Sale

- Set of 4 JBL Stage Speakers plus 8 JBL surround speakers
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HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II* Listed



A proposal for renovations to the Dome in Worthing includes provision of additional women's lavatorial facilities and re-seating of the auditorium. The CTA is to recommend that a number of the original seats be retained and displayed as heritage artefacts. A request is to be made of the local Council that enforcement measures be initiated swiftly to rectify the recent modifications to the arcade, which did not conform to the permissions obtained. *Photo taken March 2009.*

Grade II Listed

The Conservation Officer within whose purview the Picturedrome in Holmfirth is situated recognises the merit of the cinema and is monitoring planning and listed building consent applications closely.

At the Ritz in Nuneaton a site meeting has been attended by representatives of the CTA to liaise with those involved in the renovation work to the building, including a local Council planner, the owners, the architect and the builder. A section of the venue is already in active use as a Nepalese community meeting space; future objectives include a restaurant situated in the lower foyer specialising in that nation's cuisine. Part of the construction work will be undertaken by volunteers from the aforementioned community under supervision from a professional building concern.

Unlisted



A listing application for the Curzon in Eastbourne has been submitted by a third party. *Photo taken April 2008.*

The prospect has been mooted that the frieze from the façade of the Gaumont in Doncaster may be re-sited within retail space when the museum at which it is currently externally displayed is relocated. The Association is to propound that it should be mounted in the new museum.

Save Britain's Heritage has bestowed its support upon the campaign advocating retention of the Odeon in Ashford; The Twentieth Century Society has agreed to do likewise.

The frontage of the Regal in Colchester has been refreshed following complaints from local traders concerned about its previous detrimental impact upon the area. Concurrently two local businessmen have expressed interest in returning the premises to entertainment usage.

The Deal Society was contacted to establish if it intended to campaign to save the Royal; the enquiry received a negative response.

The previously reported planning application pertaining to alteration of the entrance of the Odeon in Exeter has been declined: a scheme more compatible with the building's aesthetic qualities has been solicited.

A petition has been initiated requesting that the Regal [Granada] in Kettering be reclaimed from its current desuetude and returned to community use; an application for its designation as an Asset of Community Value has also been tendered.

The architect of the alterations to Smart's Picture Palace [Essoldo] in Bethnal Green has agreed to incorporate a selection of the scant surviving original internal elements into her designs.

A planning application has been submitted for works to the exterior of the Forum (now Cineworld) in London's Fulham Road. It is not known if alteration to the current internal spatial disposition is contemplated; thus a watching brief will be maintained, although only remnants of the original décor remain currently visible. See Newsreel p20.

The Association is to press for retention of the ballroom of the Dominion in Harrow in addition to its fine frontage if plans for its redevelopment advance to fruition. The cinema was featured in a recent article in London's *Evening Standard* newspaper.



The Local Authority has refused a planning application for a hotel incorporating a cinema in its basement on the site of the Odeon in London's Shaftesbury Avenue. This structure was formerly the Saville Theatre, of which little remains internally, although its exterior, featuring a striking bas-relief frieze by Gilbert Bayes, remains largely unaltered.

Photo taken March 2004.

Its local Council has advised that it is reasonably confident that the project to convert the Majestic in Mapperley into apartments may be averted; its Conservation Officer is also supportive of the cinema's retention. In an unusual development, a local campaigner prompted the publication of an article in *Private Eye* magazine concerning the building's insecure future. See article p17

Regrettably, planning permission has been granted for alterations to the Wetherby Cinema. This outcome will entail the loss of the architectural cohesion of the current auditorium.



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; Committee's Choice; Gaumont Managers; Carlton Swansea. |
| 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 | Holophone lighting; Imitations of Odeon ; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship. |
| No 36 | £6.00 | Leslie Kemp; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; The Clifton Circuit; 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; Majestic Leeds; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Pascal J Stienlet. |
| No 42 | £6.00 | Odeon Elephant & Castle, Plaza Crosby; Depot Lewes; Cineworld Chelsea; Gaumont Sheffield Figures. |
| No 43 | £6.00 | Virgin Cinemas; Peter Jewett's ABC memories; Scala Kings Cross; Picture House Campbelltown; Beeston/Nottingham memories. |

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.

There are also available a few second-hand copies of out-of-print issues of *Picture House* 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

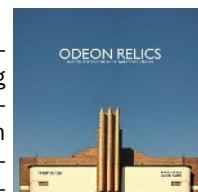
We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 2017 are £4.00 per year (6 issues); individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2018 and 2019 are £4.00 per copy. All prices include postage. There are some issues available from earlier years, 1967 to 1986 – please send enquiries to the Sales Officer.

Recently Published (reviewed in last edition)

Odeon Relics by Phillip Butler

144 pages, hardback, fully illustrated, 225mm x 225mm. £25.00 plus postage.

Photographer Philip Butler has travelled the country capturing what remains of the ground-breaking **Odeon** empire in the 21st Century. The book showcases a collection of exterior photographs, each presented with summarised histories of the building in question. A 12-page introduction by architectural writer Jason Sayer introduces the series, looking into the birth of the chain and the cinemas and illustrated by the period images of John Maltby. There is a map of locations and a comprehensive list of **Odeon** cinemas built during the period and their subsequent fate.



The Ideal Xmas present for the Cinema or Art-Deco Enthusiast!

Ordering

For post and packing: Total order value up to £20.00 please add £3.00, Total order value from £20.01 to £40.00 please add £4.00 Total order value from £40.01 to £60.00 please add £6.00. For larger orders and overseas, please contact the Sales Officer, email: [sales@cta-uk.org]. 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 and all the books 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)

Irish Cinemas:

A History in Photographs by Jim Keenan

144 pages, 240mm x 256mm, hardback with over 200 images in colour and monochrome of 139 old Irish cinemas. ISBN 978-0-9550683-9-3. Order online from [Blackwells.co.uk] or [bookdepository.com]



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

HOPE, FREEDOM AND A VUE

A report of the CTA visit on 9 October

By Jeremy Buck

The CTA last visited Eltham in 2018, to see the former Odeon at Eltham Hill but since then a new Vue Multiplex has been built in the High Street. Thus a good excuse for a return visit, coupled with two other nearby venues.



The Vue cinema opened on 25 April 2019 and has six screens, with a total capacity of 871. After a welcome cup of coffee, the friendly manager showed us around and we could see inside five of the six screens, all located on the first and second floors of the building. The sixth was already showing films – at the early hour of 11am – so we just peeked in so as not to disturb the audience of one watching *Joker*. All of the cinemas feature the usual stadium layout with big, comfy seats, a VIP section in the middle and large screens. The cinema was built on the site of former shops and the ground floor is devoted to casual dining restaurants, whilst the glass-fronted 'Skybar' above the entrance seems to be still awaiting a tenant.

Leaving the cinema, the group walked along the High Street, pausing to admire the pedestrian crossing with unusual road and pavement markings, inspired by the Marian Dorn carpet in nearby Eltham Palace. Here was the site of the former Palace/ABC, which opened in 1922 and closed in 1972 before demolition for shops.

We soon reached the Bob Hope Theatre in Wythfield Road. The building started life as a parish hall in 1910 and has been in almost continuous use for entertainment ever since. In June 1911, a film of George V's Coronation was shown, believed to be the first time that moving pictures were shown in Eltham. A pantomime in 1938 featured Frankie Howerd in his first theatrical performance. During World War II, the building was requisitioned for furniture storage and then in 1943, Eltham Little Theatre – an amateur theatre company – was formed and started using the hall from 1946. The hall was still owned by the church, who in 1979 decided to sell the building and the Eltham Little Theatre had to raise the funds to purchase, or find a new home.

This is where Bob Hope enters the scene. The famous comedian was born in 1903 in nearby Craigton Road and his interest in his home town and the theatre resulted in proceeds from the Bob Hope Classic Golf tournaments in 1980 and 1981 being donated to Eltham Little Theatre to enable them to purchase the hall. The building was renamed in honour of the benefactor, who visited in 1980, 1982 and 1991. Proceeds from a London Palladium show in 1991 enabled further expansion of the building. Until his death in 2003 he still maintained a keen interest in the theatre, as his family still do financially.

After another welcome cup of coffee, we were shown around by two of the leading lights of the theatre company. The foyer spaces have been considerably expanded in recent years, although the theatre was denied permission to build above the ground floor. There are comfortable seating areas and a bar, with panels describing the building's history arranged around the walls and an attractive display of historic posters and programmes. The auditorium is fairly plain, with around 192 seats. There is a large backstage area that can be used as a 'studio' theatre. Jude Law is another actor who started his career at Eltham. The theatre is still entirely operated by volunteers.



There was now a break for lunch with many going to the Top Deck Café nearby. Then it was all aboard the B15 bus, a small single-deck vehicle, which soon filled up with schoolchildren who for some reason were going home at 2pm that day. We passed the site of Eltham's first cinema, the Eltham Cinema, opened in 1913 and demolished in 1968 and were soon at Welling, alighting outside the former Odeon. This opened in October 1934, designed by George Coles with seats for 928 in the stalls and 450 in the circle. Coles also designed Welling's other super-cinema, the Granada, on the main road around the corner, which opened in 1937. The Odeon showed its last film in October 1960 – whereas the Granada was tripled and lasted until 1983. Its Wurlitzer organ – there until the last day – lives on at Woking Leisure Centre.

The Odeon was converted to a Top Rank Bingo Club in 1961 – one of the earliest cinema-to-bingo conversions – and at some time an adjacent shop unit was acquired to expand the entrance. It later became a Mecca Club before closing in 2007. The present occupier since 2009, Freedom Centre International Church, has retained this area as its main entrance, with the original cinema entrance occupied by a storeroom and an emergency exit.

On entering the foyer, we were supplied with yet more tea, coffee and biscuits before commencing our tour. The foyer layout is pretty much unchanged since bingo days but with more muted colours and of course no gaming machines! The Church has retained an old Mecca "Book Sales" sign as a link to the building's past.



Entering the stalls area, the Church has removed the flat floor installed for Bingo and re-instated a raked floor. Very comfortable-looking seats have been installed, with much more legroom than cinema days. All the decorative art-deco swirls and features on the walls and ceilings have been well picked out in gold and the auditorium is a generally cream colour, much different from the vivid hues of its Bingo days. Where the Bingo scoreboard once was is a gallery for live music performers. Upstairs in the balcony, the same seats are installed, with facilities for video presentations and broadcasting. The circle foyer retains the old Bingo carpet and has a good decorative ceiling. A film about the refurbishment of the building can be seen at: [youtu.be/pCoMR-SyWxE].

So ended our day's visits and thanks must be given to Marion Kennett who arranged and led the trip, with help from husband John. We also thank the management and staff of the Vue Cinema, Bob Hope Theatre and Freedom Centre International Church for their help in the arrangements.

Photos:

Vue: Kevin Gooding; Bob Hope Theatre: Harry Rigby; FCI: David Anstiss (cc-by-sa/2.0)

A SUNNY SATURDAY IN SURREY

A report of the CTA visit on Saturday 7 September By Mike Wood

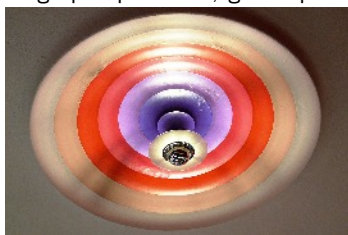
It was Saturday and up before the alarm and whistling a happy tune before tea and toast: sorry... correction. Woke at six by the annoying din of the alarm clock and I shivered and stumbled to turn on the heating. Once out of the house, the day started to get a lot better. The slightly awkward journey by public transport from Sussex to Sutton was easier by car and no problem parking in the multi-storey car park above the twelve-screen Empire, originally a six-screen UCI of 1992.



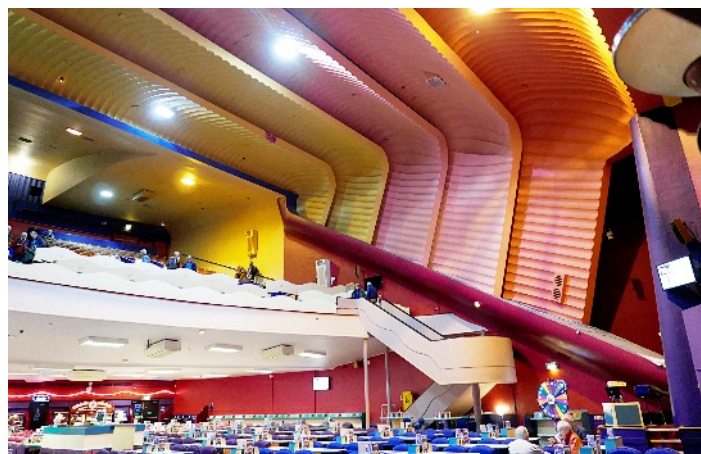
The exterior and foyer of the Empire Sutton

Your correspondent is not a fan of car parks as cinemas; the Brighton Marina Cineworld always comes to mind, surely the most unexciting start to a night out. However, Empire Cinemas took on the Sutton UCI in 2006, closing it in 2017 for refurbishment and enlargement by UNICK architects, re-opening it in 2018. It now has a significant street presence facing the St Nicholas shopping mall and once through the doors the foyer is smart, bright and welcoming, as was the manager and with coffee on the go. There are plenty of seats and a small separate lounge overlooking the space with a wall of back-lit movie posters. About twenty of us were on the visit with a chance to view the theatres, two of which were big Impact screens and all with a selection of sofas, leather recliners, etc.

Little remains in Sutton of the Gaumont (façade) and the Curzon/Studio/Cannon (latterly a nightclub) and shamefully, no trace of the big Plaza/Granada, so we took the bus the short ride to the Rose Hill district towards Morden for the Gaumont (1937 - Harry Weston with Mollo & Egan interior - listed Grade II) now on Mecca Bingo. Thankfully, apart from the bingo paraphernalia, garish paint scheme and floodlighting, Mecca has kept the building well-maintained and the auditorium still has a wow factor. It is regrettable that so few of Mollo & Egan's cinema interiors remain. The scarily unlisted but complete, Bridlington Regal comes to mind but hopefully our casework team have this on a watch list.



A light fitting at the
Gaumont Rose Hill



The interior of the Gaumont Rose Hill



The exterior and interior of the New Wimbledon Theatre

Again we boarded a London Omnibus and journeyed onwards to Wimbledon town centre for a lunch break and then to re-assemble at the New Wimbledon Theatre (1910 - Cecil Masey with Roy Young - Listed Grade II). To me, being of the Frank Matcham inclination, its exterior resembles the earlier Southsea Kings with its prominent corner entrance tower but Wimbledon was also always my childhood family Christmas pantomime outing. We got a very full tour on our visit with our knowledgeable guide, the only stipulation being no 'tripods' but your correspondent only takes snaps and hopes for the best. The 'New' tag onto its name comes from a late reworking of some interior and exterior spaces and Ambassador Theatre Group taking over its management but essentially what you see is as built. The theatre has been a popular and busy venue most of its working life and it now has a Studio stage adapted from a ballroom to the rear. It is tempting to surmise that this might have been an adaptation of the existing earlier Kings Palace theatre and cinema but that became a skating rink and is now most probably the car park.



Looking through the proscenium at the New Wimbledon Theatre



A screen at the Curzon Wimbledon

A quick switch of venues to coincide with programme breaks took us next to the HMV Curzon (2009) which was a joint venture with Curzon Artificial Eye and HMV stores, utilising empty space above the shop, which has since closed but the three-screen cinema upstairs is still a popular art-house venue with a nice big bar. We were able to get a quick look inside one of the screens, which is a simple plain box, perhaps awaiting a UNICK refurbishment.



A screen at the Odeon Wimbledon

Retracing our steps back along Wimbledon Broadway, the twelve-screen Odeon (2002) sits across a modern 'piazza' from Morrisons supermarket with all screens upstairs, including a recently added IMAX. The friendly duty manager kindly let us view one such, which was empty on a break in shows. This is in the current house style and it was good to see the lobby busy on a Saturday afternoon. For most members of the Cinema Theatre Association, we would probably have preferred the now demolished Regal/Odeon (1933 – Robert Cromie for County) back down the road, with another fine lost Mollo & Egan interior; can you detect a theme here?

Our thanks go to Ray Ritmeester and all the managers and staff of the venues on this day out in South London, for the organisation, visit notes and friendly welcome by our hosts.

Photos by the author

Links for more: [www.unick.com]
[www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/WimbledonTheatre.htm]

CINEMA BUSINESS

UK'S CHEAPEST CINEMA

After surveying more 500 cinemas across the UK, [vouchify.co.uk] found that the cheapest cinema in the UK is the Gaumont Plaza in Flint, North Wales. The cinema offers adult tickets at just £3 each. The next eight places are taken by cinema charging £3.50. The research found that the average adult ticket costs £9.33 while the average child ticket costs £7.25.

Wales Online – 20 August; The Argus, Brighton – 24 August; sent in by Barry Quinton

RANK SAYS ITS LUCK IS TURNING

The chief executive of Rank Group said it was beginning to enjoy the benefits of its multi-million pound transformation. It operates 55 Grosvenor Casinos and 82 Mecca Bingo Halls, many in former cinemas. Although these venues suffered a 3% drop in revenue to a respective £353.2m and £202.1m, Rank's online business increased revenues by 17% to £143.6m. Rank reported flat revenues of £729.5m to the end of June but a 26% slide in pre-tax profits to £34.6m

The Times – 23 August; sent in by Barry Quinton

THE BIG PICTURE AT CINEWORLD

Cineworld endured a 14% drop in admissions for the first half of 2019. Pre-tax profits fell 13% to \$139.7m. Box office sales declined 15% to \$1.49bn. Shares went down 1.4% or 3½p to 242½p. The group operates 786 cinemas with 9,494 screens across Britain and Ireland, Europe, Israel and America.

The Times – 9 August; sent in by Barry Quinton

EVERYMAN EXPANDS

Pre-tax profits fell to £445,000 in the six months to 4 July compared with £1.3m for the same period last year. Revenue jumped 16% to £28.9m and ticket sales grew 9% to just under £1.5m. The company is due to boost its 28-strong estate with a further 15 branches.

Evening Standard – 24 September; City AM – 25 September; sent in by Tom Laughlan

CURTAIN UP FOR SALE

An American Private Equity Group plans to put The Ambassador Theatre Group [ATG] up for sale, only six years after taking control in a £350m deal. ATG owns more than 50 live venues in Britain, Germany and America, including London's Savoy Theatre. ATG's parent company narrowed its pre-tax losses from £55.5m to £18.5m in the year to March 2018. Sales grew 9% to £367.5m over the period.

Sunday Times – 6 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

NECROLOGY

ANNA QUAYLE 86

Anna first appeared on screen in the Beatles' film *A Hard Day's Night* but is probably best known for her role as Baroness Bomburst in *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. Further films included *Drop Dead Darling*, *Casino Royale* and *Up the Chastity Belt*.

JEREMY KEMP 84

His career was dominated by roles in uniform, such as *The Blue Max* [1966] and TV's *Z Cars*. His other film appearances included *Operation Crossbow* [1965], *Darling Lili* [1970], *A Bridge Too Far* [1977] and *Four Weddings and a Funeral* [1994]. He also appeared on stage.

PETER FONDA 79

Son of Henry, brother of Jane and father of Bridget, he is probably best known for his role in *Easy Rider* [1969]. He also appeared in *Dirty Mary*, *Crazy Larry* [1974] and *Cannonball Run* [1981]. He directed and starred in *The Hired Hand* [1971].

JOE LONGTHORNE MBE 64

Although we don't think Joe appeared on the cinema screen, he headlined the London Palladium and the Talk of the Town and filled the Royal Albert Hall. His 1993 season at Blackpool's Opera House brought ticket receipts of £1.8m. He had three platinum discs for record sales.



THE ABC PORTSMOUTH

By Mike Whitcombe

It doesn't seem possible that twenty years have now passed since the ABC Portsmouth closed. For over sixty years this art deco marvel was ABC's flagship cinema in a heavily populated, Naval dominated South Coast City. Although rarely mentioned when discussing the circuit's history, this purpose-built ABC was designed by the legendary WR Glen and, despite tripling in the early 1980s, retained most of its delightful, original decoration until the night it sadly closed, just a few weeks before the beginning of the new Century.

Situated at the northern end of the City centre, a road away from the birthplace of author Charles Dickens, the ABC Portsmouth was built on the site of an old soap factory and began life as the *Savoy*, a name often used by ABC. Opening night was Saturday 17 July 1937 and was attended by the Lord Mayor, Councillor FJ Spickernell, the owner of several local cinemas himself. The main feature was *That Girl From Paris*, a romantic musical starring Lily Pons, Jack Oakie, Gene Raymond and Mischa Auer. The supporting feature was a one-reel coloured musical revue, hosted by the now under-rated comedian Lee Tracey, called *Cinema Circus* along with *Colourful Bombay*, a coloured interest film and the *Pathé Super Sound Gazette*. The following day, a crime story called *Lady from Nowhere*, starring Mary Astor and Charles Quigley, was added to the bill. Reginald Porter-Brown provided the musical interlude at the three-manual Compton organ, which boasted six ranks of pipes, a Melotone unit and a console illuminated by automatic or manually controlled changing colours.



The proscenium and grille at the ABC Portsmouth

The main attraction on opening night was, however, the building itself which seated 1,911 patrons, 699 in the circle and 1,212 in the stalls. In the opening night brochure, the directors of ABC claimed the cinema was "most modern in design" and offered the "residents of Portsmouth a luxury cinema foremost in the realm of entertainment, envied by many provincial cities, surpassed by none." The man chiefly responsible for this was architect William Riddell Glen, a name as synonymous with Associated British Cinemas as that of founder John Maxwell.

Born in Hutchesontown, Scotland, in 1885, Glen was articled to Burnet, Boston & Carruthers in 1900 while studying at the Glasgow School of Architecture. He commenced independent practice in Glasgow in 1912 before joining the Glasgow Highlanders at the outbreak of World War One, winning the MC and rising to the rank of Major. After demob in 1919 he went into partnership with Albert Victor Gardner, specialising in the design of 'atmospheric' cinemas. In 1929 he dissolved the partnership, moved to London and joined ABC.

Glen had a distinctive style and many of his trademarks were visible in the *Savoy*. There was his recognisable tall main foyer (even though the site dictated the actual foyer depth itself was limited) and a paybox beneath twin stairs leading to a bridge, edged with a decorative metal balustrade that overlooked the foyer. Inside the auditorium, Glen's famous stepped-down ceiling design using scalloped edges outlined in gold and prominent grille work either side of the screen was also in evidence. The site also made effective use of every inch of space, another Glen characteristic. No wonder the directors added in the opening brochure: "The seating facilities, the acoustic properties, the sound and range of vision have received most careful study, with the result that perfection in each of these has been attained."



Entrance hall ceiling and lights

Main construction was completed by Brazier & Son of Southampton. The decorative metal grille work on the balustrades and interior door windows was produced by Garton & Thorne of London, who at the time claimed their handiwork could be seen in 375 cinemas across the land. The beautiful fibrous plasterwork that gave the building such subtle elegance was carried out by Clark & Fenn of London. A local firm called Cooks, run by a Mr Cook, who owned the nearby Shaftesbury cinema, won the contract to do the rest of the fine decoration throughout the building. Ross FC projectors and a Western Electric Mirrophonic sound system were installed in the projection box.

When war was declared two years later, concern was expressed for the safety of the building. Situated next to the perimeter wall of the Naval dockyard, a prime Luftwaffe target, bombing scares were frequent. During one raid two bombs crashed through the roof, landing on top of the ceiling and igniting, while another plummeted down a sealed ventilation shaft. Fire teams with stirrup pumps doused the roof fire but left the third bomb to burn itself out. Another raid saw a huge landmine smash through the roof and lodge itself amid mangled girders in the roof void.

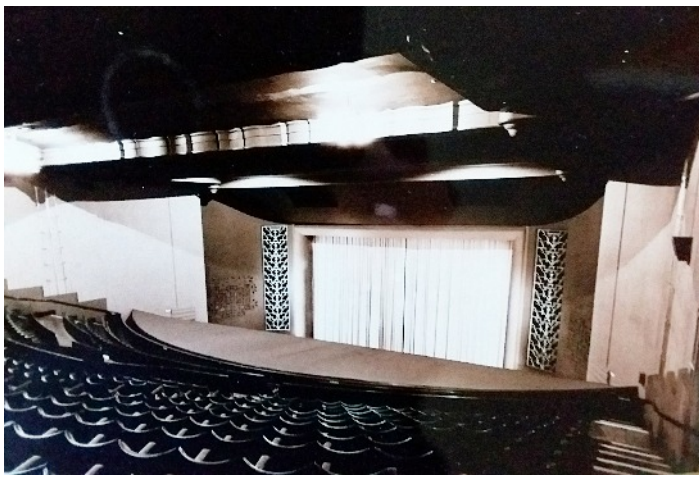


Entrance hall & stairs to circle

The cinema was closed for six weeks while repairs were made but the dented girders could still be seen fifty years later.

The *Savoy* continued to draw the crowds in the post war years – *House of Wax*, the first coloured 3D film released in 1953 was particularly popular – but by the end of the 1950s the organ was removed and sold to Devonshire Avenue Baptist Church. In 1961 the cinema was renamed ABC and given a facelift. The stucco frontage was covered with mosaic tiles and the seats were upgraded, reducing the capacity to 1,841. In 1967 a new projection box was installed at the rear of the circle to enable 70mm presentations to be screened, reducing the capacity further to 1,660. *Far From The Madding Crowd* starring Julie Christie, Alan Bates and Terrence Stamp was the first 70mm film to be shown. The old projection room became a store room.

This was the last major investment at Portsmouth by ABC, as two years later on 27 February 1969, EMI took control of ABC and its 242 cinemas. EMI sensibly retained the ABC name on these cinemas and continued to do so in late 1979 when EMI merged with Thorn Electrical Industries to become Thorn EMI. During this period the large car park, which was attached to the ABC Portsmouth, was compulsorily purchased by the Council for a roundabout and a road widening scheme. Two of the four retail units known as the Savoy Buildings, which were attached to the cinema and owned by it, were also purchased and demolished.



Screen ①, the former circle



The foyers to screen ① and ② & ③

Most traditional cinemas – at least those that remained in business – were now either twinned or tripled. The ABC Portsmouth, however, was still a vast single-screen operation. But at the beginning of 1982 the cinema became the last ABC to be converted. The former circle became Screen ①, with Screens ② & ③ being placed in the rear two thirds of the stalls. It was a subtle tripling, with little change in the former circle, the proscenium remaining unscathed and the entrance, circle and stalls foyers remaining as Glen had designed them – with the exception of a confectionary and pay kiosk from the ABC Basildon that was placed in front of the original paybox. The ABC 123 reopened on 29 April 1982 with Agatha Christie's *Evil Under the Sun*, *The Secret Policeman's Other Ball* and Warren Beatty's masterpiece, *Reds*. Seating capacity was now 1,000 with 542 in Screen ①, 255 in Screen ② and 203 in Screen ③.

A succession of corporate takeovers coupled with boardroom greed now consumed what had once been the proud ABC circuit, culminating in the closure of many well-loved cinemas. It began in April 1986 when the Bond Corporation, headed by Alan Bond, paid £125 million to acquire the 106 ABC cinemas still open. A week later he sold it to Golan and Globus' Cannon Cinema Group for £175 million. Cannon quickly rebranded their new sites – the ABC Portsmouth became the Cannon Portsmouth – and this signage remained in place after 1992 when, faced with bankruptcy, Cannon sold to Pathé Communications, who subsequently bought MGM and renamed themselves Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Cinemas. In July 1995 Virgin acquired the 119 strong MGM Cinemas operation for £195 million but in a pre-planned bid sold 90 high street sites in March 1996.

The buyer was Barry Jenkins, a former managing director of MGM Cinemas, who put together a consortium with backing from venture capital company Cinven to finance the £72 million deal. As Jenkins had acquired the rights to the ABC name in the 1980s, he immediately rebranded the circuit ABC. The ABC Portsmouth once more boasted ABC signage.

In December 1989, during these years of little investment and debatable leadership, I began work as a member of staff at the ABC Portsmouth – everyone called it the ABC even though the Cannon logo at the time suggested otherwise. I didn't even have an interview. The manager, Mr Thompson, was informed that I worked at the independent Rendezvous cinema where I did publicity, started films, tore tickets and, most importantly, repaired seats. "Fancy a job?" he asked. I replied I did. The next ten years, until the cinema closed, proved to be the happiest I've experienced in a working environment.

A big reason for this was the beautiful Glen designed building, so little altered despite tripling. It was truly a joy and privilege to work in, especially in the hours before opening when I had it to myself as I wandered around repairing seats. But cinemas were built to entertain

the masses and nothing could quite match those exhausting days when the queue for the latest blockbuster would literally curl around the building. *Jurassic Park*, *Batman* and *The Hunt for Red October* were huge successes, although they couldn't match *Robin Hood*, *Prince of Thieves*, which opened in June 1991 and played until Christmas Eve. An all-night show of all three *Back to the Future* films sold out Screen ① and allowed those of us working to watch the sun rise as the credits for the last film rolled.

Dressing the canopy was my responsibility and I always took it seriously, putting up the film titles as well as the names of the main stars. Staff morale was good and we often became friends with many of our regular patrons, who were great movie buffs. There were always trouble makers, of course, including several knife wielding teenagers but they normally gave no further trouble after being kicked out via a secluded exit door – and you can read into that what you will! As the dockyard was next door, we had to evacuate the building a couple of times following bomb scares. These proved to be hoaxes, unlike the armed robbery when £10,000 was stolen from the safe one Monday morning after myself and three other staff members were threatened with a gun, forced to our knees, bound together and had hoods placed over our heads. This incident saw a manager dismissed for gross misconduct and a cashier and doorman sacked for ticket fiddling seem rather dull by comparison.

The local Council never showed much enthusiasm for the ABC in these final years. They wanted to redevelop the site into the gateway to the City by knocking down an art deco gem and erecting, of all things, yet another faceless hotel. One day in 1997 we arrived at work to be greeted by a front page headline in the local newspaper saying that we were closing. Apparently, planning permission to redevelop the site was going to be passed at the next Council meeting. The company refused to be drawn on the subject so I wrote to our two local MPs saying the ABC Portsmouth played a vital role in the local economy and that we should stay open. The Liberal MP Mike Hancock, whose career would soon end in disgrace, replied by saying never to contact him again. The Labour MP, Syd Rapson, however, believed the ABC should stay open and campaigned successfully for that to happen. It was a welcome reprieve for staff and patrons.

Each takeover – or rumour of one – always worried us. But it was when Jenkins reintroduced the ABC brand that we became really concerned. The word was he didn't really have the finances and that was confirmed when our manager returned from a management conference in late summer 1999 to say the site was being sold to a property developer, despite the fact we were one of the few ABC cinemas still turning a profit. The site was freehold and that sadly meant a quick buck for a company desperate for cash. Closing night was Thursday 11 November 1999. The company refused to reveal whom they had sold it to or even admit to the local media that we were closing. On a sad, final evening, the ABC Portsmouth closed with *American Pie* in Screen ①, *Ride with the Devil* in ② and *Bowfinger* in ③.

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The ABC Portsmouth, proudly defiant on the final day of trading



Demolition - looking towards the rear of the auditorium

Before the sale could be finalised, ABC had to oversee a complete strip-out of the building. I remained on site for the next two weeks to help in this task. Every one of the thousand seats were removed, the screens were dismantled and all the projection equipment was extracted, with the rectifier from the circle box hauled to the top of the exit stairs and pushed brutally down. We even unscrewed and removed every original art deco door handle and the distinctive metal balustrades on the entrance staircase among many other priceless items. It was a heart-breaking task, particularly as the building, which had always been well maintained, was still in a remarkably good condition.



The proscenium is laid bare



The site of the former ABC today

The Council now made proud boasts on how the site, which greets anyone entering the City by road to see such attractions as the Historic Dockyard, HMS Victory, the Mary Rose and the D-Day museum, would be redeveloped. But the mysterious owner suddenly claimed he couldn't afford to pull the cinema down. Eventually a government grant was obtained and in March 2002 the ABC was demolished. But those Council boasts still proved to be hollow. Seventeen years on and nature has now reclaimed the site. A buddleia tree currently grows exactly where the entrance doors once welcomed generations of excited movie goers and the City is poorer for it.

Sepia photos by Dave Jordan; colour demolition photos by the author

NEVER TOO OLD

A woman aged 103 went to the *Downton Abbey* film at the Century Cinema in Letterkenny, Co Donegal (Ireland). It was the first film she had attended in 80 years.

Sent in by Bob Bradshaw

M15 AND ODEON

Newly released Top Secret files dated 1940 show that MI5 thought that Odeon was a cover for Russian spies. They discovered that Arnold Deutsch, who recruited the Cambridge spy ring, was a cousin of Odeon founder Oscar Deutsch. A number of suspected Russian spies gave Oscar as a reference when they came to Britain. Further memos, released by the National Archive at Kew, show that Oscar had sought permission to employ his cousin as an industrial psychologist at a salary of £250 a year. The Home Office rejected the application on the grounds that there should be "no difficulty" in obtaining a qualified British psychologist for the post and questioned what an industrial psychologist would do in a cinema. Another memo reveals that the Ministry of Information had Oscar Deutsch circulate a questionnaire to his managers asking how they felt about aliens and fifth columnists.

Daily Mail - 24 September; sent in by John R Forster & Tom Laughlan

CALL OFF THE MODS

A plaque commemorating the 40th anniversary of The Who's classic mod film *Quadrophenia* was stolen from the Brighton Music Walk of Fame on the Palace Pier. The theft happened shortly after the plaque was unveiled during the Brighton Mod Weekender; CCTV footage showed a group making off with it. However, the thief returned it soon after, with a note just saying "sorry". He/she claimed they were drunk and the plaque was only attached with a cable tie. They said they were getting threats on social media.



The Argus, Brighton - 30, 31 August; sent in by Barry Quinton

WARNER'S LATEST STAR

Warner Bros has bought the London Film Museum in Covent Garden despite it making a net loss of £92,000 in the year to 31 January 2018. It opened in 2012 and is home to the world's biggest collection of cars from James Bond movies.

Sunday Express - 22 September; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Barry Quinton

CINEMAS 'TWEAK' START TIMES

Cinema bosses have been accused of making cinema-goers watch around 30 minutes of adverts by publishing misleading start times. A Cineworld in Bristol and an Odeon in Leeds/Bradford made customers sit through 27 minutes of ads before *Downton Abbey* started. At Birmingham's Star City it was 28 minutes after the advertised start time before the opening credits.

Daily Mail - 12 October; sent in by John R Forster & Tom Laughlan

PC WC

London's Old Vic has been criticised for making all its 44 toilets "self-selection" or gender neutral. The move comes just months after a fundraising campaign to double the number of women's loos. Theatre-goers now see labels signposting which blocks contain urinals and which contain cubicles; one said, "You've got a ton of urinals for men but women have to share what's left of the facilities with men."

Metro - 4 October; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

NOISES OFF

After visiting the Vue in Fulham to see *The Joker*, Hugh Grant tweeted "Am I too old or is the cinema much too loud? Unendurable. Pointless." Several movie-goers agreed with him. The cinema defended its volume levels saying they were regularly checked to ensure they complied with Health and Safety standards. Most cinemas set the volume level at around 85 decibels, similar to the noise of a vacuum cleaner. But the British Tinnitus Association said that 80 decibels would be a safer level over the duration of a film.

Daily Mail - 14 October; sent in by Carl Chesworth

FROM TIP-UPS TO TREADMILLS

Cinemas That Became Gyms

By Gavin McGrath

It's time to bring cinemas to the masses again with a selection of picture houses that have become gymnasiums and fitness centres. There have been at least 50 over the years but as with my previous ventures they still need to be trading to qualify for inclusion.

ABERDEEN



The former Odeon in Justice Mill Lane opened as the **Regent** in February 1932 and was designed by Thomas Scott Sutherland with a granite façade. What else would you be expecting in this City? It was built by Poole's Theatres but taken over by the County circuit a few years later. Odeon acquired the business in 1939 and renamed it in July 1940. In 1974 the cinema was tripled by creating two small screens in the rear of the stalls area, with the front stalls area being subdivided in 1991 to create a five-screen cinema. It eventually closed in June 2001. Swiftly on the back of this it was converted to a Wellmans Health club but now operates as a Nuffield Health fitness centre. In addition to the 20-metre swimming pool, the amenities include a sauna and steam room and a personal training area. Various health programmes are available along with the services of a physio-therapist and nutritional therapist. The building has been listed as a Category C since 1998.

BEESTON HILL (Leeds)



The **Crescent Cinema** opened in August 1921 and was designed by CC Chadwick and William Watson for owners John Cloughton and Lionel Harpham. Standing on a sloping site, the building is rather plain-looking livened up by a protruding entrance block with columns in front of the entrance doors. It lasted until July 1968 and then went over to bingo. In the noughties it was a health and fitness centre called the Crescent Club but has been superseded by Winstons Health and Leisure. Facilities include a fitness room, sunbed, jacuzzi and sauna, with big-screen TVs and pool tables. It also claims to be the UK's largest massage parlour and its website invites you to check out the beautiful girls eager to pleasure your every need.

DENABY MAIN (South Yorks)



The **Empire Palace** on Doncaster Road opened in November 1913 and was a venture by a group of local businessmen. Opening night was delayed by a day owing the licence not being available on time. The auditorium was originally furnished with velvet tip-up seats in the costlier areas with continuous seating in the more affordable areas, although it hadn't been completely finished on time. Following the end of films in 1962 it became the Lucky Strike Bingo club, which lasted for around 20 years or so. After a spell on snooker it was turned into a gym in the 1990s and is still operating as one today. An extension of the building at the rear serves as a fish and chip shop.

ECCLESHILL (Bradford)



The former **Regal** cinema opened as the **Palladium** in January 1929 and is situated on Norman Lane. It was built by Ralph Dickinson in red-brick and stone with a pitched roof. The auditorium consisted of stalls and circle with love seats at the back of the stalls. It was over a year until sound came to the cinema in May 1930 and it was taken over by Modern Theatres a year later and renamed. It was modernised in 1958, having been taken over by the Star circuit, enabling it to screen CinemaScope presentations. A firework display was laid on and an elephant toured the vicinity to promote the reopening. Ken Dodd was invited to launch the children's matinées. It closed in November 1966 and found life as a bingo club, which lasted until about 1988. After that a snooker club took over the premises using the stalls area only and the first floor became a gym, following the installation of a false floor. When the snooker club closed the whole building became a gym, which now operates as Flacks Fitness. The centre has a selection of different machines and weights and the outdoor area has tyres and monkey bars if you get a bit bored with the more conventional aids. The barrel-vaulted ceiling can still be seen in the upstairs level.



HARROW



The former Granada on Manor Parade opened in October 1937 and was built for Sydney Bernstein's circuit of the same name. The opening ceremony was performed by Jessie Matthews and Sonnie Hale and the audience were treated to *The Show Must Go On*, in which Matthews appeared and *Ready, Willing and Able*. The design by J Owen Bond & Sons included a stage, which would prove useful in the 1960s for all those pop concerts, along with a Wurlitzer 3-Manual/8-Rank organ, still in situ with the console on display. The auditorium had seats on two levels with interior decoration by Theodore Komisarjevsky. The cinema was tripled in 1973 by creating two small screens in the rear stalls. It was taken over by Cannon in January 1989 and renamed Cannon. Six years later it became a Virgin cinema following the takeover but that lasted less than a year and the house became an ABC in May 1996 and was so renamed. This too was short-lived and the cinema closed in November 1996 following the opening of the Warner in the town centre. After a number of years lying empty, the property was eventually converted into a branch of Gold's Gym. The facilities include a swimming pool and a Thai massage parlour operating from the balcony foyer. It is named after the founder of the business, Joe Gold, who set up his first centre in California in 1965. He sold the company in 1970 and later set up World Gym, which he continued to operate until his death in 2004. Gold's Gym is currently in private hands with three other branches across London. The building itself has been Grade II listed since 1988 and retains many original features inside plus the cantilevered canopy over the main entrance.

MARKET DEEPING (Lincs)



The former Empire cinema in Church Street opened in September 1928 and was owned by Harry Bancroft, a former vaudeville artist. He went on to operate a number of other cinemas in the County. This particular one was designed by Francis Burdett Ward and lasted until May 1963. The building was later a Vauxhall car dealership and then Market Deeping Motors until about 10 years ago. It was then converted into the Empire Gym, which opened in 2014. Among the facilities available are a sun suite, a High Intensity Interval Training Room and a group cycling room. The building has very little of cinematic interest inside but it does feature a picture of the cinema on one of its walls.

NEWBURY (Berks)



The Forum in Park Way was another creation by Harold Seymour Scott and opened in November 1939. ABC acquired the Forum but it was not renamed until 1964. The cinema was split for cinema and bingo in 1972, closing in June and reopening that October. Alpha Bingo occupied the stalls area and it was most likely then that the cinema was rebranded EMI. Cannon acquired the cinema in 1986 and it was subsequently renamed, by which time the bingo operation was Coral, although this had closed by 1988. The cinema closed again in April 1995 but was rescued by the Robins chain, which had 13 other halls at the time and reopened three months later. It is unclear whether it was renamed Robins as after closure in November 1998 it is pictured boarded up as the Newbury Forum. Although the site was earmarked for a multiplex no takers signed up to the idea and the building had become a LA Fitness centre by 2006. After a £900,000 refurbishment it reopened as a BST Fitness centre in April 2015. The gym is run by the Basingstoke Sports Trust, which has a 20-year lease on the building. In addition to the gym, fitness studio and sauna, there is also a swimming pool offering classes in scuba-diving. Fitness classes include Zumba, yoga and Pilates.

PITLOCHRY (Perth & Kinross)



The Regal on West Moulin Road was designed by architect John Brander, who drew up the plans in 1935. It opened in September 1936 with early records documenting it was owned by William Waugh. In later life the Poole family took it over eventually resorting to a summer only operation. It closed in the early-1990s after which the hall was used for other events such as roller-disco. It subsequently became a leisure and fitness centre and has since been extended. It is now the Live Active fitness centre providing two gyms and a sports hall, along with a series of classes. You can even have your birthday party here.



SALE (Greater Manchester)



What we tend to remember as the Odeon actually opened as the Pyramid Theatre in February 1934. It was designed in Egyptian Revival by Drury & Gomersall and had seats across stalls and circle. The Odeon circuit took over the Washway Road cinema in 1942 renaming it in June 1945. The circuit parted company with the building in 1981 and the lease was taken over by the Tatton Cinema Group who renamed it the Tatton. Three years later the lease was taken back by Rank owing to high running costs and the cinema closed. The building was bought by Trafford Borough Council and became a nightclub called JFK's. This later closed and the building was converted into an LA Fitness centre, using the rear entrance in Ashton Lane, which had become a Sports Direct Fitness centre by 2013. The building was listed Grade II in November 1987.

SEAFORTH (Liverpool)



The Palladium is situated on Seaforth Road in this north Liverpool suburb. Its two-floor frontage is easily recognisable by the glazed tile faience and centred triangular pediment, however the original veranda has long since been removed. It opened in December 1913 with seating in stalls and circle and was converted for talkies in December 1930. Amateur talent contests were held here in the 1930s under the watch of Gilbert Dewhurst. Crosby Entertainments took over in 1949 and had the cinema refurbished. Closure came in June 1959 after which it served as a tobacco warehouse and a second-hand furniture shop for the next 20 years or so. It later became a gym, which has operated under the Fitness Connection brand for some time and is now one of Liverpool's longest-serving fitness centres. The building is Grade II listed.

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WELSHPOOL (Powys)



The former Pola Cinema is situated on Berriew Road in the town and it opened in April 1938. The auditorium, rather noticeably, did not have seats under the 'balcony' and the large stage made it possible to host pantomimes, variety shows and even boxing tournaments. The cinema was part of the Paramount Picture Theatre chain and originally closed in October 1983 following the death of the owner. It was reopened however a fortnight later by a group of businessmen, including Charlie Thacker, who had been involved with the cinema for some time. It was converted in 1986 when the ground floor became a discotheque and the cinema moved upstairs. Bingo was also held once a week. It closed again in 1989 for three years but reopened in May 1992 with the ground floor now the Park Diner. The cinema was twinned two years later and in the remaining years of its life was run by Thacker's son. It eventually closed in June 2013 when it was decided to be too costly to convert from 35mm to digital technology. The entire building is now the Great Escape Fitness Centre and Beauty Spa. The gym and spa are situated upstairs while the beauty parlour is downstairs. The gym has a selection of cardio machines and weights but if you don't fancy this you can go for the tanning, facials or body treatments that the centre has to offer.

WEST END, LONDON



The former Odeon in St. Martin's Lane, which is the only post-war cinema in this selection, opened in October 1967. It was specialising in Disney films during the mid-1970s but reverted back to mainstream presentations by the end of that decade. In November 1981 it became an arthouse cinema when Rank renamed it The Lane but this was short-lived as when new owners Artificial Eye took it over in October 1982 they changed the name to Lumière. When the offices upstairs were turned into a hotel the cinema closed, that being in June 1997. Today the space operates as the Gymbox fitness centre. In addition to the usual selection of fitness machines, there is a holistic suite, boxing ring and matted combat area. There are classes for Ashtanga yoga, dance, Muay Thai kickboxing and Pilates. Resident DJs provide the music.

Photos courtesy of: Gavin McGrath (Aberdeen, Denaby Main, Harrow and West End, London); Winstons (Beeston Hill); Google (Eccleshill, Pitlochry and Sale); Paul Bryan (Market Deeping); Newbury Today (Newbury); SteH (Seaforth) and John Clift (Welshpool).

REWINDING BACK

MR KIDDIE GRANTED A KINEMA LICENCE

At Widnes police court on Monday, Mr James Kiddie, the proprietor of the **Alexandra Theatre** was granted a temporary Kinema licence until the next Licensing Sessions. He was also granted a special licence to hold sacred concerts on Good Friday.

Runcorn Guardian - 10 April 1914

NORTHWICH EXHIBITORS' PRIVILEGE

After making unsuccessful applications for some years, Northwich cinemas have succeeded in securing licences for Good Friday performances.

The Bioscope - 5 April 1928

FIRE AT THE REGENT

The courage and resourcefulness of the staff at the **Regent Picture Theatre**, the largest house of entertainment in Brighton, prevented disaster on Friday night [25 January 1929] when a serious fire broke out and caused considerable damage. Shortly before 11-o'clock, towards the final episode of *The Two Lovers* a tongue of fire was seen to shoot out and within a few seconds the screen had disappeared in a sheet of flame. The alarm having been raised, the theatre staff traced the origin of the fire to a dressing room and immediately took all possible measures to prevent the spread of the outbreak, pending on the arrival of the Fire Brigade, who were on the scene in a few minutes. Meanwhile, the audience quietly dispersed. The orchestra continued to play lively airs until their position became so uncomfortable that they had to beat a hasty retreat. Happily there was no panic amongst the audience, thanks to the admirable methods employed by the attendants in shepherding them to the exits. A large crowd in the dance hall on top of the building received their first intimation of the fire by large volumes of smoke that soon reached suffocating proportions - but the whole of the dancers were got out without difficulty or injury.

The Bioscope - 30 January 1929

OPERATOR'S CLAIM UPHELD.

Damages were awarded to a cinema operator at Widnes County Court on Friday, when Andrew Currier sued the Widnes Picturedrome Company. Currier said it was his duty to attend to the fires for the heating apparatus. On 26 February, to help to make the wood burn, he threw a quantity of oil on the fire. There was a sudden backfire and he sustained severe injuries to his face and hands.

The Bioscope - 15 October 1930

NOT ENOUGH BRITISH FILMS

The proprietors of the **Tower Picture House** York were summoned last Thursday for not exhibiting 7½% of British films. Mr Norman T Crombie, for the Board of Trade, said only 6% of features and 5% of shorts were exhibited. From 11 January to 11 August 1930 no steps were taken to show British films, although during that time such films were available. Mr E Cooper, for the defence, contended that when the theatre changed over from silent to talking pictures, it was too late to book any British films, which were very difficult to obtain. A fine of £20 with 10 guineas costs was imposed.

The Bioscope - 27 May 1931

The Projected Picture Trust

Dean Clough Mills, HALIFAX, HX3 5AX

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

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

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

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

contact@pptrust.org

www.projectedpicturetrust.org

£10 FOR QUOTA DEFICIT

A penalty of £10 was imposed upon Walter and Eric Gallimore, proprietors of the **Century Picture House** Widnes at Widnes Petty Sessions on Thursday for not showing the required quota of British films during the film year 1929-1930. Defendants pleaded that the quota did not give an opportunity to the man who only had a sound disc and not a sound film apparatus.

The Bioscope - 27 May 1931

CAPITOL FIRE



The **Capitol Didsbury**, Manchester, one of the best equipped cinemas in the country, was reduced to a mass of debris by a fire, which broke out on Monday night. Only the outer walls, tower and entrance remain. The roof of the building crashed in and the large organ collapsed and was left in a mass of ruins over the stage.

The Stage - 28 April 1932

CINEMA FIRE

The **Palace Cinema** at Neath (Glamorgan) owned by South Wales Cinemas Ltd was destroyed by fire yesterday morning. The Post Office next door was undamaged.

The Scotsman - 9 January 1935

OPENING OF ABERDEEN CINEMA POSTPONED

The opening of the **Topical News Cinema** in Diamond Street has been postponed. It was fixed for this afternoon but following a tour of inspection yesterday, the magistrates decided that, as the work of internal construction was not completed, the cinema could not be ready in time. In consequence they withheld the licence until the inside work is definitely completed.

Aberdeen Press and Journal - 3 September 1936

BRIGHTON CINEMAS

The aggregate seating capacity of the 17 cinemas in Brighton is 18,637. With three performances daily, seven days a week, the gross capacity is 391,797 and as the population of Brighton at the last census was 147,427, it would be possible to seat practically every person in Brighton three times a week.

Mid Sussex Times - 9 February 1938

WEST END CINEMA DOME FALLS IN STALLS

The fall of a four hundredweight plaster dome on to the audience at the **London Pavilion** Piccadilly Circus, was investigated before the cinema was allowed to reopen last night. The crash occurred the previous evening. Twenty one people were taken to hospital with bruises, shock and cuts but were allowed home after treatment. The dome, part of the ventilating and lighting system, fell twelve feet from underneath the balcony on to four rows of the back stalls (six shillings and sixpence seats). The show stopped and the lights went up. There was no panic and the audience were asked to leave. Free tickets for another show were issued. Early yesterday carpenters and cleaners began removing the debris and boarding up the hole. While the theatre architect and London County Council officials made inspections, two smaller domes, each eight feet across and the wads (plaster covered ropes) fixing them to the ceiling were examined. Then an LCC architect gave permission for the theatre to reopen.

Daily Herald - 12 April 1952

All sent in by David A Ellis

MAJESTIC SAFE

By Bob Massey

As I write this article in May [2019] the old Majestic Cinema building in Mapperley [Nottingham] has just been granted [local?] listed status, so it is now safe from the demolition that was being proposed. The building is well cared for by the present users and happily will now be with us for many years to come. The building was built by Alfred Thraves, one of the country's leading cinema designers, so the building itself is important to the area as is the business it now houses. It is great news that the Majestic is safe; however this is not the "safe" referred to in the title.

In December 1949, the Majestic was still a working cinema but on that date, the *Nottingham Journal* reported that it experienced destruction of a different type. GA Steight, the manager of the Majestic, came to open up the cinema on Friday morning 16 December 1949. He was there to get the cinema ready for the first showing of the day, the film *Superman*. Steight came upon a scene of destruction that could have come from the film itself! The office safe was now situated on the auditorium floor in one of the aisles. It was smashed open and the takings, "quite a large sum of money", had been removed. It would appear that the thieves had manhandled the solid steel safe, weighing some 3cwt, down a flight of stone steps from the office at the top of the cinema to the foyer. They then moved it through this area to the circle, where they rolled or pushed it, using a ladder that had been left at the rear of the circle, to the balcony rail. After bending back a section of the safety rail they pushed the safe over the edge. It fell 17ft to the stalls below.

People living in the immediate area did hear a crash about 4am but considering the weather at the time, thought it to be thunder. The thieves then forced the damaged safe open and took the takings, which was mainly in silver. Their intention had been to take the safe away through the rear doors of the cinema, where they had originally forced their entry to the building. A large four-wheeled trolley had been abandoned outside these doors for the purpose of wheeling the safe away. However, the fall from the balcony caused enough damage to crack the safe open, saving the thieves the time and effort of moving it somewhere else to finish the crime.

Mr J Stables, the owner of the Majestic, told the *Nottingham Journal* that "they made a good job of it. Carpets had been ripped up from the circle and used to deaden the sound as the safe was taken downstairs across the foyer and into the circle. As well as breaking into the safe, both the booking office and the paybox had been forced and even the telephone wires had been cut." The amount of time and effort this must have taken suggests that they were supermen in strength although not in deed. As we don't know how much was taken, we can only speculate whether the criminals thought all their work was worth the effort. There is no record of any of those involved ever being brought to justice.

Reprinted from NG3 magazine – July/August by kind permission of the author
Permission arranged by Terry Hanstock, who adds further information in the next column:



The Majestic Mapperley in May 2006

MAJESTIC POSTSCRIPT

By Terry Hanstock

The Majestic Cinema (robbed of £155 on the night of 14-15 December 1949) was not the only local cinema to be targeted.

The following month thieves struck at the Ritz Cinema in nearby Langley Mill, sawing through the hinges of a safe (seven locks offering little protection) and removing its door. £50 in cash, two pairs of gloves and some nuts were stolen along with ice cream from the Ritz's refrigerator.

On the morning of 20 February 1950, Frank Croson, the assistant manager of the **Metropole Cinema**, Mansfield Road, Sherwood (just under a mile away from the Majestic Cinema) noticed that a side window had been removed and a bar forced from the metal grid on the inside. The manager's office had been ransacked and the safe door completely removed



The Metropole Sherwood in July 2004 [demolished 2006]

after being sawn through at the hinges. Four jemmies and some hacksaw blades were found behind a radiator. A leather bag valued at 10 shillings and £316 in cash had been taken.

The crime wave came to an end on 11 May when Stanley Bernard Benson, a 38 year old lorry driver and Frederick Ernest Hawkins, a 35 year old welder, were interrupted whilst trying to break into the safe of the Rio Cinema, Oakdale Road, Sneinton. (This was the cinema's third robbery since the end of the war.) In the early hours of that morning PC Lancaster had been trying the doors of the cinema and noticed Hawkins throwing an attaché case over a wall and into the yard of the neighbouring Oakdale Hotel. He then climbed over the wall himself. The constable got on his bicycle, rode around the corner and saw Hawkins running along Swains Road with Benson in front of him. Hawkins was eventually apprehended in the front garden of Bleak House. "There he showed fight. There was a struggle which continued for some minutes." This ended after the householder eventually emerged and assisted the constable in restraining him. Back at the cinema it was discovered that the exit door at the rear of the building had been forced open, as had the door of the manager's office. The hinges of the safe were sawn through but it was still securely locked, the intruders only having time to make off with sugar, tea, chocolate, sweets and the attaché case (valued at £4). The office had been ransacked and red ink spilt over papers and documents. Two jemmies and a pair of hacksaw blades were found on the floor of the office. Hawkins confessed that he had made these and other housebreaking implements at the engineering firm where he and Benson worked. The two men were remanded in custody the following day, Hawkins asking to see his wife and Benson asking to see a psychiatrist. Both admitted to having earlier visited one of the burgled cinemas to see *The Third Man*. At a hearing in front of magistrates on 19 May they were committed for trial at Nottingham Assizes.

On 20 June 1950 both Benson and Hawkins pleaded guilty and asked for seven other offences – including robbing cinemas in Beeston and Stapleford – to be taken into consideration. Benson was jailed for five years and Hawkins for three. Both had been imprisoned before, Benson's criminal career starting at the age of fourteen. Their defence counsel pointed out that the proceeds of their crimes had been spent on their families and not on "drink or gambling." Benson's wife suffered from "nervous trouble", an after-effect of being bombed during the war. His share of the money had been spent on aiding her recovery. For his part, Hawkins said that towards the end of 1949 "...we were short of money and decided to get some... We shared the cash and sometimes we used my motorcycle combination."

PS: The *Nottingham Journal* (12 May 1950) noted that *Lust for Gold* (1949) was advertised as a forthcoming attraction at the Rio Cinema on the night of the robbery.

Ripley and Heanor News and Ilkeston Division Free Press – 27 January 1950;
The Nottingham Evening Post – 11, 12, 19 May 1950;
The Nottingham Journal – 12, 13, 20 May 1950, 21 June 1950.

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 added 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]

ABERDEEN



Plans have been submitted to add a 409-seat IMAX screen to the nine-screen Cineworld at Queen's Links. It would be housed in a two-storey extension. 86 parking spaces would be lost as a result of the development at the complex. This would take the total seating capacity to about 2,500 across ten screens, one of which is already a 4DX screen. The cinema opened as the Virgin in July 1997. {26961}

Evening Express, Aberdeen – 25 October; photo taken September 2008

ALNWICK (Northumberland)

Two final planning applications for “finishing touches” at the Playhouse have been given the nod. The venue closed last summer for a £3.3m refurbishment. A 50-year lease has been granted to the Alnwick District Playhouse Trust. The trust will operate the main auditorium, the ground-floor studio theatre, the bar and an expanded café facility. The Council will use the rest of the ground floor for the library, tourist information and customer services. After slight delays, reopening is now scheduled for November. See photo front cover Bulletin 52/1. {47495}

BBC News website – 10 August; Chronicle Live – 22 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock

ANNAN (Dumfries & Galloway)

Plans for a third screen at the Lonsdale have been approved. The new seats have been ordered. Opening has been delayed slightly to early 2020. The bingo operation has closed for the new screen. See p17 Bulletin 53/4. {17440}

Annandale Observer – 4 October

BANBRIDGE (Co Down)



Not previously shown in the Bulletin is the eight-screen Omniplex at the Boulevard Outlet Mall, which occupies some units in the Mall. It opened in June 2016. There is a 200-seat MAXX screen. {60424}

Sent in & photo by Bob Bradshaw; photo taken September 2019

BASINGSTOKE (Hants)



Slough Borough Council has bought the ten-screen Odeon at Basingstoke Leisure Park for £8.43m. It said it plans to reinvest money generated through rental income on the Borough's frontline services. The cinema opened in September 1990 as a Warner Village; it later became a Vue and the Odeon in 2007. {24135}

Slough Express – 27 September; sent in by R David Simpson; photo taken May 2006

BATH (North Somerset)

Plans have been announced for the redevelopment of the former Scala at Oldfield Park, currently used as a Co-op convenience store. The major changes will be to the 1960s extension, to provide residential accommodation for a nearby college, a dance school, affordable housing and parking. A new Co-op store will be incorporated. The façade will be restored and retained. The cinema opened around 1919 and closed in the early 1960s. Because of Rank's dispute with Fox, it was the first cinema in the area to show CinemaScope. {28722}

Batch Chronicle – 3, 17, 19 September; sent in by Michael Crowle

BIDEFORD (Devon)

Plans have been revealed for a four-screen 180-seat cinema at the Affinity Shopping Centre. No planning application for the proposals has yet been submitted but the developers say they hope the project could be complete by the summer of 2021. No operator has been named.

Devon Live – 29 August

BODMIN (Cornwall)

Further to the Newsreel item in the last Bulletin, the fourth screen at the Capitol opened on 6 September. Work had been held up by the presence of a stone arch at what was to become the screen end. And the seating capacities are rather more generous than initially thought: Screen ①:146, Screen ②:71; Screen ③:42 and Screen ④:39. {60297}

Sent in by David Simpson

BOGNOR REGIS (West Sussex)

Proposed changes to the Picturedrome have been submitted by its Town Council owners. The works would include internal alterations to the lobby and front desk area as well as an extra door to the left of the main entrance. The proposed changes are described as “minor and less than substantial”. See events p4. {14782}

Bognor Regis Observer – 29 August

BOURNEMOUTH

Plans have been submitted to turn the Grade II listed former Grand in Westbourne into a gym. A mezzanine would be built in the auditorium. Previous plans for a Wetherspoons pub came to naught. The cinema opened in December 1922 and films ceased in October 1977. It became a bingo hall, which closed in January 2018. Photos at [tinyurl.com/y49kun9m]. {22430}

Daily Echo – 18 October; sent in by Philip Stevens

The Shelley Theatre in Boscombe is presenting a season of films on 35mm called *Dirt in the Gate*. The first was Doris Day's *The Pyjama Game*. [shelleytheatre.co.uk]

Sent in by John R Forster & Philip Stevens

BOVEY TRACEY (Devon)

New plans have been proposed to convert the 16th Century former *King of Prussia* pub into a 118-seat cinema/theatre with a café, bar and a restaurant. The group behind the project completed the purchase of the Grade II listed building back in November 2018. But following the initial demolition work, further survey work became necessary as the original measured survey was found to be inaccurate and, at the same time, additional historic fabric was revealed during removal of modern interior fittings and decorations.

Devon Live – 21 August

BRADFORD (West Yorks)

The five-year contract between the National Science and Media Museum and Picturehouse was due to end on 31 October. The three cinemas will now return to being fully independent and be programmed by the INDY Cinema Group. The Pictureville name will be retained. The 306-seat cinema in the former Library Theatre is the only cinema outside the USA that can show 3-strip Cinerama as well as 35mm and 70mm. The annual Widescreen Weekend was recently held there. {3673}

Yorkshire Post – 10 October

BradfordLive has published a picture of the shell of the former New Victoria / Gaumont / Odeon, now all the internal subdivisions have been removed. It is being converted into a 4,000 capacity music venue. Visit [www.bradfordlive.co.uk] and click on <Updates>.

Sent in by John West

BRANDON (Suffolk)



The former Avenue cinema will be demolished after plans were approved for an eight home development. It opened in late 1934 with 512 seats, having taken only twelve weeks to build. In 1966 it was operating split cinema/bingo but bingo had taken over by the 1970s. This closed around 2007 and the building has been empty since. View the proposals at [planning.westsuffolk.gov.uk] and search: DC/19/1008/OUT. {27169}

Bury Free Press – 13 September; photo taken August 2004

BRIGHTON

The Grade II listed Duke of York's is undergoing six weeks of work to the exterior. Workmen stripping back the paint have discovered original sculpture work on the building. Coincidentally, the works began on September 22, the exact date the cinema opened in 1910. {2433}

The Argus, Brighton – 1 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

Further details have been released re plans for the site of the Astoria, as mentioned on p23 of the last Bulletin. A six-storey development called 'Rox Brighton' will contain apartments and shops and reflect the former Astoria's style and glamour. There will be vertical fins in white on the front of the building. Ornate metal grilles on top of the ground floor have been replicated from those discovered inside the cinema. The letters from the **ASTORIA** sign have been kept and will be set up in the leafy central courtyard. Twelve of the original cinema seats are being restored and reupholstered and will be moved to a community space. Prices start at £199,000 for a 'studio' apartment. [rox-brighton.com]

Metro – 1 October; sent in by Margaret Burgoine, Tom Laughlan & Barry Stevenson

BURGESS HILL (West Sussex)

Plans have been submitted to demolish the Martlets Shopping Centre and build a £65m development, incorporating a ten-screen Cineworld. No time scale has been given.

The Argus, Brighton – 1 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

BURNLEY (Lancs)

Plans to revive the former Empire have been set back by the finding of asbestos in the circle, upper circle and across the main auditorium. The deadly dust was discovered in the main seating area after vandalism to panels at the back of 'the gods' forced the cancellation of Heritage Open Day tours. {36755}

Lancashire Telegraph – 18 September

CHATHAM (Kent)

A new IMAX screen opened at the nine-screen Odeon on 2 September. It measures 8m tall and 15m wide. It appears to be a conversion of screen 5 and has 122 hand-made reclining seats. {24449}

Sittingbourne News Extra – 25 August; sent in by Ray Dolling

CHINEHAM (Hants)

Plans to build a cinema in Chineham have been scrapped after the developer claimed the residents did not want one.

Basingstoke Gazette – 5 September

CLEVEDON (North Somerset)

The Grade II listed Curzon has been awarded £239,900 in Lottery funding to replace its 1920s roof tiles, which had become very fragile and caused leaks throughout the building. The venue opened in April 1912. {846}

North Somerset Times – 14 September

COALVILLE (Leics)

The Council is hoping for a six to eight-screen cinema in the Belvoir Centre, now that its ownership has changed. It is understood that discussions with a "credible operator" are taking place. Coalville has two former cinema buildings still standing.

Ashby Times – 27 September

CORK (Ireland)

After 25 years of operation, the cinema in the suburb of Douglas closed on 10 October. It is to be replaced by an Aldi store. CinemaWorld opened in August 1994 but attendances have fallen due to stiff competition.

Evening Echo, Cork – 1, 7 October; sent in by Bob Bradshaw

CUMBERNAULD (North Lanark)

Plans have been approved for a new cinema to be built in the eastern car park of Cumbernauld Town Centre's phase 4. There will be eight screens, each with 146 seats. No operator or time scale has been given.

The Scotsman – 27 Sept; *Cumbernauld News* – 25 September, 2 October

DAVENTRY (Northants)

Arc Cinemas has been named as the operator of the new four-screen cinema on the former library site. Opening is scheduled for spring 2021.

Daventry District Council website; sent in by Terry Hanstock

DERBY

In spring 2013 the former Gaumont/Odeon/Cannon was converted into a pan-Asian restaurant called Cosmo. It has recently had its frontage refurbished and the BFI 'Centenary of Cinema' plaque (pictured) is missing. {14897}

Sent in by Robert Taylor



DONCASTER (South Yorks)

Work has started on a six-screen cinema next door to the CAST theatre. The venue's structure is almost complete with bricklayers and scaffolders expected on the site in late September. Completion is said to be on target for spring 2020. It will be operated by Savoy Cinemas.

Doncaster Free Press – 5 September

DUBLIN (Ireland)

Everyman has submitted plans for its first venture in Ireland. A two-screen cinema with 51 and 72 seats is planned for Dawson Street.

Sunday Business Post – 1 September

DUNDEE

Further details have been announced of the conversion of the Odeon to an Odeon Luxe, trailed on p18 Bulletin 53/4. The cinema has remained open during the work, which is due to be completed by late November. The cinema will retain its current ten screens but one will be upgraded to a 171-seat iSense auditorium with a 13.7m wide screen.

Dundee Courier – 18 September; sent in by David J Kay

EXETER (Devon)

It is thought that air conditioning and heating are to be installed at the four-screen Odeon. Extra insulation will be installed in screen ①. The news will please regular cinema-goers who often suffer because it's too hot or cold inside. The building opened in August 1937 with 1,920 seats; it was tripled in 1972 and a fourth screen added in 1988. {6245}

Devon Live – 27 August

GLASGOW (Central)

A fire alarm at the Cineworld sparked a full-scale evacuation at 9pm on Sunday 6 October with staff slammed for their lack of training and “shambolic” response to the situation. Members of the public soon took to Twitter to complain about the lack of instruction from staff while others said there were no staff at all to guide them to the nearest fire exit. The fire service responded quickly and identified it as a false alarm but normal protocol for a large building such as Cineworld is to have fire marshals and staff trained to take command in any potential emergency situation. The cinema has 18 screens over nine floors. {27079}

Daily Record – 7 October

HUCKNALL (Notts)

Work has started on the redevelopment of the Byron into a four-screen Arc cinema. Opening is scheduled for ‘early 2020’. There is local controversy over the decision to move the entrance to the side of the building.

Hucknall Dispatch – 18, 23 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock

LEEDS (West Yorks)



The former Pavilion in Stanningley is to be transformed into 17 apartments, set to open next year. This will coincide with the building's 100th anniversary, having opened in February 1920 with 644 seats. It closed in April 1970 and became bingo. It is not known when bingo ceased but the building was gutted and transformed into office space. {3684}

Yorkshire Post – 27 August; photo taken June 2005

LEVEN (Fife)



Plans have been lodged for a second screen at the Levenmouth Community Cinema. The 250-seat cinema opened in 2014 in the former Regent; it is run by the operator of the Kino in Glenrothes. The building opened in 1922 with 1,000 seats but it is not known when films ceased; it is now Grade C(s) listed. The CTA visited it as a bingo operation in 2008. {23290}

Evening Telegraph, Dundee – 9 September; photo taken September 2006

LIVERPOOL (Garston)



A £5m plan has been launched to restore the Empire. It opened in June 1915 with 1,040 seats. Films ceased in December 1962 followed by 46 years on bingo. It has been on the Theatres Trust ‘at risk’ register since 2009. Stage one of the scheme is to secure local ownership. {32688}

Liverpool Echo – date unknown; sent in by Mike Taylor; photo taken July 2007

LONDON (Catford)

A three-screen cinema with 220 seats opened on 25 September in the former Poundland store. It is called Catford Mews and the capacities are 73, 60 & 60. Catford's last cinema, the twin-screen ABC closed in 2001 and is now a church. See events p3. {60792}

Evening Standard – 20 September; sent in by Tom Laughlan & R David Simpson

LONDON (Chelsea)



The six-screen Cineworld Fulham Road closed on 6 October. It opened as the Forum in December 1930 with 2,220 seats, a full stage and an organ. It was renamed ABC in 1961 and tripled in 1974; further screens have since been added. After a renovation it is due to reopen in November under the Picturehouse banner. {17033}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken April 2006; see Casework p5

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LONDON (City)

The new three-screen Everyman opened on 4 October in the Broadgate Centre, adjacent to Liverpool Street Railway Station. The auditoria have 151, 87 & 26 seats. {60798}

Sent in by Ken Roe

LONDON (Croydon)



The Fairfield Halls has reopened after nearly three years of refurbishment costing £42m. Both the 1,794-seat main hall and the smaller 763-seat Ashcroft Theatre were equipped to screen films but were never used as full-time cinemas. Sadly, the painted safety curtain in the Ashcroft Theatre had to be destroyed during the refurbishment as it contained asbestos. {29122}

The Stage – 26 September; sent in by Barry Quinton; photo taken April 2006

LONDON (East Finchley)

The Phoenix is asking for architects, planners and building experts to come forward as it looks to build a second screen. This would be on the car park in Fairlawn Avenue, behind the venue. {14814}

Ham & High – 6 September

LONDON (Harrow)

Further to the news on p25 of the last Bulletin about the redevelopment of the Dominion/Safari it has been revealed the plans include a four-screen cinema on the ground floor with flats above. Each screen would have about 100 seats. The façade will be restored.

Harrow Times – 29 August, 17 October;
sent in by J Brierley, Mike Collins & Gary Donaldson

LONDON (Holloway)

Permission has been applied for to remove screen ③ at the Grade II listed Odeon and reinstate the original grand foyer space. Visit [planning.islington.gov.uk] and search ref P2019/2501/S19. {4300}

Islington Gazette – 12 September; sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Kensal Rise)



Plans have been approved for a second screen at the Lexi. The cinema is now on a mission to raise the required £500,000 through grants and crowdfunding. It is hoped it will be open in 2020. The plans are for a sustainable sunken building with solar panels and an insulated 'green' roof. A windowless screening space will reduce heat loss. Bricks from the boundary wall will be reused. The original 80-seat cinema opened in October 2008 in a former Edwardian community hall; it is volunteer-run and donates all its profits to charity. {25925}

Brent & Kilburn Times – 12 September; photo taken August 2019

LONDON (Kensington)

Hammersmith Council has approved plans for a £1bn redevelopment of the Olympia Events Centre. These include a 1,500-seat theatre, a 1,000-seat performing arts venue and a four-screen cinema as well as two hotels, shops and cafés. Completion is scheduled for 2023.

Arts Professional – 17 September

LONDON (Lewisham)

The Ladywell Playtower closed 15 years ago and suffered serious fire damage in 2006. In 2017 the Council invited bids to restore the Grade II listed tower and accepted a joint bid for 19 to 21 flats and a Curzon cinema. Since then nothing has happened and the building remains boarded-up. If you would like to sign the petition to reopen the building visit [tiny.cc/playtowerpetition].

Lewisham Ledger – Oct/Nov; sent in by Janet Digby

LONDON (Shoreditch)

The former Aubin/Electric cinema has become a private cinema for use of members of Soho House, a private members' club. The CTA visited in March 2019. {32941}

Sent in by Ken Roe

LONDON (Wandsworth)

After years of pop-ups around London, Backyard Cinema has taken over the former Capital Studios building and opened on 13 September with 250 seats. The cinema space resembles a crumbling theatre, strewn with vines and lit by huge chandeliers.

Time Out – 3 September; sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (West End)

Selfridges is to open a permanent three-screen cinema in its flagship Oxford Street store at the end of November. It will be operated by Olympic Studios and have Dolby ATMOS sound.

City AM, The Times, Daily Mirror – 11 September;
sent in by Margaret Burgoine, Terry Hanstock, Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton

LYME REGIS (Dorset)

Owners of the fire-stricken Regent are considering building two high-quality apartments on the site to offset "extremely high build costs" of a new single-screen cinema. The Regent has stood empty for more than three years following an electrical fire in March 2016. While the Art Deco frontage of the Grade II listed building remains largely untouched, the auditorium was completely destroyed. {22441}

Lyme Online – 30 August

MANCHESTER (Central)

A new three-screen Everyman was due to open in the former Granada TV Studios on 31 October. It has a total of 248 seats.

Oldham Times – 19 September; Manchester Evening News – 3 October;
sent in by Carl Chesworth

MANSFIELD (Notts)



Screen ① at the eight-screen Odeon is blocked off whilst being upgraded. The plans suggest only 130 hand-made recliner seats, installed in pairs, a layout common with Odeon Luxe cinemas. The application also seeks permission to install an illuminated IMAX sign on the exterior of the building. Reopening was scheduled for 13 November. The cinema opened as an ABC in December 1997. {25062}

Mansfield Chad – 11, 19 September; sent in by Terry Hanstock;
photo taken September 2006

MINEHEAD (Somerset)

Plans, reported on p25 of the last Bulletin, for a three-screen cinema in The Avenue have been approved. It will be operated by S&B cinemas, who run cinemas in Burnham-on-Sea and Frome. It is hoped to be open by Easter 2020.

Somerset County Gazette – 18 September; sent in by Mike Collins

MONTROSE (Angus)

The Montrose Playhouse Project has been awarded £100,000 from Screen Scotland's cinema equipment fund towards the purchase of projection and sound equipment. The project is to convert the town's former swimming pool into a three-screen cinema, hopefully by the end of 2020. The charity needs to raise at least 90% of the required funding. A £2.26m Scottish Government grant has taken the total to 75%. It is hoped to raise the remaining £80,000 through crowdfunding and sponsorship.

Dundee Courier – 20 August

NORTHAMPTON

The former Savoy/ABC is getting a rebrand with visitors soon able to enter through the main doors again. The name of the main auditorium will be changed to The Deco at the Old Savoy. Stage Right Productions, which has been running The Deco since 2009, will take over the auditorium management and hires. But the Jesus Centres Trust – the charity arm of the disgraced Jesus Fellowship Church, known as the Jesus Army – will continue to manage and use the building. The cinema opened in May 1936 with 1,954 seats. {22658}

Northampton Chronicle – 1 October; sent in by Ian Paterson

NOTTINGHAM



The Grade II listed former Capitol in Radford has been placed on the 'at risk' register by Historic England. It opened in October 1936 with 1,222 seats and films ceased in June 1968. It became a bingo hall until 2004 and is now a church. {22609}

Nottinghamshire Live – 16 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken July 2004

NUNEATON (Warks)



The eight-screen Odeon is having a revamp, described as "something special". New reclining seating is being installed – could it become an Odeon Luxe? It opened in May 1999 as an ABC. {25227}

Coventry Live – 29 August; photo taken August 2004

PAISLEY (Renfrew)

The organisation behind scrapped plans for an arts and entertainment venue has now announced it wants to build a new cinema on the High Street. Plans are still at an early stage but would likely have three screens.

Paisley Daily Express – 20 August

PETERHEAD (Aberdeen)



The former Regal is set to reopen as a five-screen Arc cinema, hopefully around Christmas. It will boast 422 luxury leather armchair seats, digital laser projection with 3D capability and Dolby Digital 7.1 surround sound. The Irish cinema operator is investing £2 million in converting the building; Aberdeenshire Council has given £200,000 towards the project. It was last used for Gala Bingo, which closed last January. The building opened in 1939 with 751 seats and films ceased in the early 1960s. The move will lead to the closure of the 280-seat volunteer-run Peterhead Cinema at the Leisure Community Centre. {45846}

Press & Journal, Aberdeen – 11 September, 16, 25 October; photo taken September 2008

PLYMOUTH

Plans have been approved for a three-screen cinema in the Grade I listed Melville Building at Royal William Yard. It would be operated by Everyman and have 187 seats.

The Herald, Plymouth – 11, 12 September

The new twelve-screen Cineworld opened on 22 October in the Barcode complex at Bretonside. There is a 4DX screen and a 450-seat IMAX screen measuring 18.5m by 23m, the largest that Cineworld operates. Tickets were just £3 for the opening week. {60950}

Plymouth Live – 10 October; sent in by Ken Roe

PORTSMOUTH

The decision by Sainsbury's to save £500 million over the next five years by closing 15 supermarkets and 40 convenience stores has led to the closure of the London Road Sainsbury's Local, which was housed in the long entrance foyer of the Odeon Portsmouth (Andrew Mather 1936). The Local closed on 5 October 2019, seven years after Sainsbury's converted the foyer into a store by bricking off the auditorium (which has remained empty since closure in 2008) and knocking through into the retail units situated either side of the foyer, which Odeon also originally owned. Plans to demolish the cinema and build housing on the site (including the large car park, now overgrown and littered with burnt-out cars) were filed in 2018 but failed to obtain planning permission.

Sent in by Mike Whitcombe

REDCAR (Cleveland)

A new three-screen 184-seat cinema will be built on the site of the Regent if plans are approved. The present cinema was closed in April 2018 due to structural problems. Under the £9m scheme, the screens would have 34, 56 & 94 seats. A new pier may even be built if a feasibility study gives the 'thumbs up'.

Teesside Live – 18 October; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Anthony Wills

REDHILL (Surrey)

The cinema in the **Harlequin Theatre** reopened in October after a year-long refurbishment project; it has been renamed the **Waller Studio**. 91 new seats have been installed together with new carpets and lighting. The delay was caused by "contractual difficulties". After an introductory period at reduced prices, admission will be £9 for adults and £8 for children and concessions. Films could also be screened in the 594-seat main theatre but it is not known if this facility is still used.

Surrey Mirror – 19 September

SCARBOROUGH (North Yorks)

A planning decision on a new five-screen cinema on the former Atlantis water park at North Bay was deferred at the eleventh hour after objections over flooding. This is the latest in a series of delays for the project.

Yorkshire Post – 30 August, 6 September; *Scarborough News* – 6, 12 September

SLOUGH



The ten-screen **Empire** in the **Queensmere Shopping Centre** is unlikely to remain in its present form if the Centre is redeveloped. It was bought by The Abu Dhabi Investment Authority in 2016 and the plans are likely to be made public in November. The cinema opened as the **Maybox** in November 1987 and has had several operators since. {24512}

Slough & South Bucks Express – 13 September; sent in by R David Simpson; photo taken April 2006

SOUTHPORT (Merseyside)

A new independent 70-seat cinema called the **Bijou** opened on 19 October in the former Latin Lounge on Post Office Avenue. It is a volunteer-led and not-for-profit community interest company. [southportbijoucinema.co.uk]

Southport Visitor – 19 September

STAFFORD

The **Stafford Cinema** (ex **Odeon**) has reopened in time for the half term holiday after closing last February. A new owner, known as 'Cinema Sam' has come out of retirement to taken over the venue and will refurbish it. Two screens have reopened but screen ③ will remain closed until it is renovated. Better temporary heating has been installed and they have measured up for a new permanent heating system. Both new and classic films will be shown – the opening week saw *Singin' in the Rain*. All seats cost £5 while a family ticket for four people of any age costs £15.

StokeonTrent Live – 25 October; sent in by Allan Pointon

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON (Warks)

A statement released by **Picturehouse** confirms that their cinema in Windsor Street will close on 5 January. It is understood the lease on the building expires in 2020. It opened in May 1997 with two screens on the first floor, seating 208 and 104. {21199}

Stratford Herald – 17 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock & Stuart Jarvis

SWANSEA

Swansea council is to take ownership of the Grade II listed **Palace Theatre** to develop community, office and retail space inside. The authority plans to fully restore the building's iconic façade while developing a "fully modern interior" over the next three years; costing is put

at £5m. The theatre opened in 1888 with 900 seats and by 1908 films were part of the programme. The auditorium was at first floor level and had two balconies. It became a cinema until about 1954 and later bingo. It was last used as a nightclub and has been empty since 2006. It suffered an arson attack in September 2019. {22953}

BBC Wales News website – 11 September

TOTTON (Hants)

An appeal is to be launched against the Council's decision not to allow four flats to be built adjoining the former **Savoy**. The proposals would entail the loss of four parking spaces. The former cinema opened in January 1935 and films ceased in March 1961. The building is now flats. {50581}

Southampton Daily Echo – 1 July; sent in by Ian Patterson

TUNBRIDGE WELLS (Kent)

Work on the site of the former **ABC** [etc] is expected to get under way shortly after plans were approved. The development includes a new cinema.

Kent & Sussex Courier – 6 September

WIGAN (Lancs)



The **Old Courts**, a non-profit arts group, wants the Grade II listed **Royal Court Theatre** in King Street to become the 'epicentre' of theatre, music and dance in the town. Campaigners are hoping to raise £1.2 million to complete the work, which has also been backed by Wigan Council. The building first opened in 1886 but was redesigned in 1899 with 1,259 seats on three levels. It was modernised in 1930 and became the **Court Cinema** until 1973. It had been equipped to show 70mm films. It became a bingo hall, which closed towards the end of the 1990s. It was last used as a nightclub. The CTA visited in October 2007. {23485}

Manchester Evening News – 9 September; photo taken October 2007

WOLVERHAMPTON

The chain that will run the new multiplex at the **Westside** development will be revealed soon. Construction is expected to start next spring and be completed by March 2021. The cinema is expected to have twelve screens.

Wolverhampton Chronicle – 12 September; *Express & Star* – 7, 18 September

A new fundraising initiative has been launched to help the **Lighthouse**. The two-screen venue has faced significant financial cuts since 2015. Audiences continue to grow by 10-12% each year. It opened in March 1987 in the former **Chubb** factory. {25862}

Express & Star – 15 October; sent in by Ivan Harris

WYMONDHAM (Norfolk)

Plans have been submitted to convert the Grade II listed old goods shed next to the railway station into a twin-screen cinema. One screen would have 94 seats and the other 31.

Eastern Daily Press – 23 September; sent in by Les Woods

YORK

A major refurbishment is taking place at the twelve-screen **Vue** at **Clifton Moor**. It is planned to modernise the look of the building, replacing the roof tiles and exterior cladding with zinc sheets. A licensing application reveals plans to change the seating in the auditoria and a refurbishment of the concessions area. The cinema opened as the **Warner** in March 1990. {25875}

YorkMix – 6 September

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

105 years



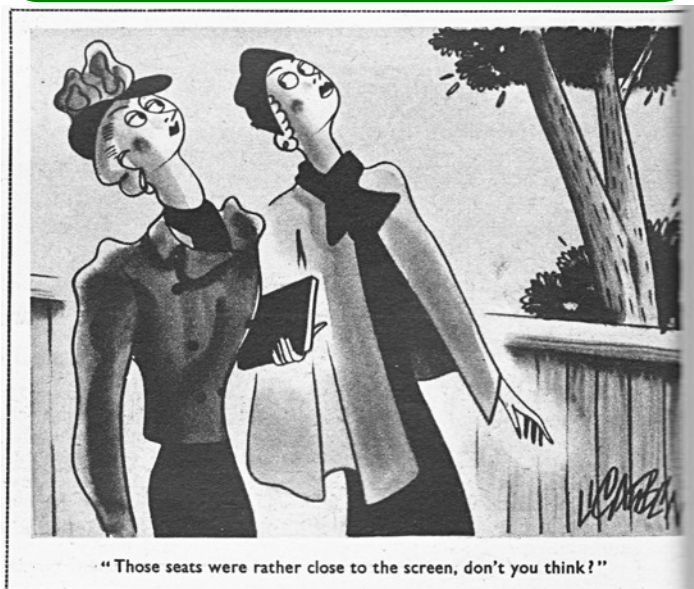
Hyde Park 73 Brudenell Road, Headingley, Leeds.
Opened 7 November 1914. Architect unknown. Grade II listed.

National Picture Theatre 144 Beverley Road, Hull.
Opened 23 December 1914. Architects Runton & Barry. Only façade remains, auditorium bombed in 1941. Grade II listed. *No image.*



Regent 85 Regent Road, Great Yarmouth. Opened 26 December 1914. Architect Francis Burdett Ward. Grade II listed.

CARTOON CORNER



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

90 years



Regent/Gaumont/Odeon 3 St Helen's Street, Ipswich. Opened 4 November 1929. Architect William Edward Trent. Grade II listed.



Palace/Gaumont/Liberty/Himalaya Palace 14 South Road, Southall. Opened 30 November 1929. Architect George Coles. Grade II* listed.

Plaza 51 Whittington Street, Northwich. Opened December 1929. Architects Seager Owen & William Owen. Grade II listed. *No image.*

85 years



Granada 6 Castle Street, Shrewsbury.
Opened 14 November 1934. Architect Cecil Masey. Grade II listed.



Forum/ABC 456 Palatine Road, Northenden, Wythenshawe. Opened 22 November 1934. Architect Charles Hartley. Grade II listed.
Kings/Regal/Cannon/MGM/ABC 24 Titchfield Street, Kilmarnock. Opened 17 December 1934. Architects Alexander Cullen and Charles J McNair. B-listed. *No Image.*



Forum/ABC 9 Highgate Road, Kentish Town. Opened 17 December 1934. Architect John Stanley Beard. Grade II listed.



Paramount/Odeon 56 Renfield Street, Glasgow. Opened 31 December 1934. Architects Frank T Verity & Samuel Beverley. B-listed.

80 years



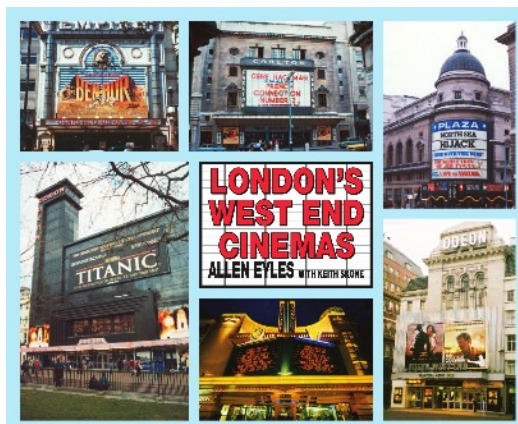
Granada 154 Clarence Street, Kingston-Upon-Thames. Opened 3 November 1939. Architect George Coles. Grade II listed.



Ascot/Gaumont/Odeon 1544 Great Western Road, Anniesland, Glasgow. Opened 6 December 1939. Architects Robert Elder & Charles J McNair. Façade only. B-listed.

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.
Price – £25.00 + £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.

QUOTATIONS

Another cinematic quotation from the list sent by Gavin McGrath:

- ◆ It's simple. [PG] means the hero gets the girl, [15] means the villain gets the girl and [18] means everybody gets the girl.

Michael Douglas

LETTERS

MORE TRAILERS

I read with great interest the article on Movie Trailers in the July / August Bulletin and it brought back memories of how we used to splice all of these – and some adverts – together to make up a show! There was always a challenge if you had just one scope trailer in what my old chief call a ‘flat show’ all widescreen programme. It was quite a common experience – especially back in the 60s with the ‘roadshow style’ of films to get a trailer out to the audience in plenty of time. The art was to have a long “also full supporting” day title tail on the outgoing machine (projector) which would be set at widescreen with lots of blanking to avoid the possibility of a ‘white screen’ so the scope trailer would be set up – all two minutes of it – on the incoming machine. You wait for the “also full supporting” end title, bring in the non-sync, up the footlights, open the masking, motor up the incoming machine, change over to the day title for the scope film, focus, fade non-sync and footlights, bring up sound on trailer! Then over to outgoing machine to lace up incoming programme feature, keeping an eye on the scope trailer for the tab dot – normally closing the tabs on another “also full supporting programme” title, reset everything, masking etc to then open up with certificate on the incoming widescreen feature!



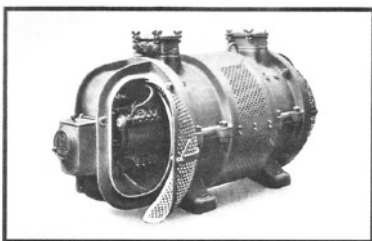
Quite a few minutes of ‘run around’ just to show a scope trailer – all two minutes of it. With two or three shows a day this routine had to be repeated – but it was important to get the publicity out there in the patron domain! This was in the day – as Mike put it – “the good old days of 35mm” when presentation and timing was a projectionist’s art and pride, so sadly lost in today’s cinema experience. No sense of presentation – just stops and starts with blank screens and no non sync – almost a projectionist’s ‘mortal sin’ back in the 35mm days. Patrons were oblivious as to what was going on behind them and the effort being put in to get the show across – but projectionists just took all of this in their stride! Just as an aside – I do like the trailers but not the way Odeon have “dumbed” it down in such a patronising title shown at the beginning of their programmes!

David Reeves

ROTARY CONVERTER

I spotted this picture in a newsletter from the Mather & Platt Long Service Association. The unit is probably a rotary convertor changing 220v AC from the local supply to either a three phase 415v supply or higher voltage DC supply for projector arc lamps.

The full text reads: “In 1910 Governments throughout the world introduced a special Act in the interests of public safety to shut down cinemas. The danger within these cinemas showing these incredible silent moving pictures was the close proximity to the highly flammable celluloid films and the arc light needed to illuminate the high voltage town supply. Mather & Platt rose to the occasion by designing a patented Graph Convertor. It safely converted the towns’ electricity supply to a safe level without damaging or impairing the brilliance of the arc light. Only cinemas fitted with this Mather & Platt convertor were granted a Government Licence to operate. You won’t be surprised to learn that these convertors were installed in cinemas throughout the world and Hollywood went on to develop the worldwide Movie Industry that still dominates the film industry today.”



The Mather & Platt Cinematograph Converter

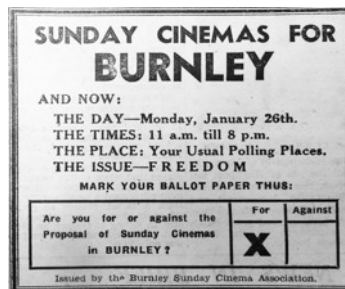
Despite the inaccuracies in the piece this is an interesting and perhaps forgotten piece of apparatus, which must have been widely installed. I’d love to see photos of this or similar kit in situ and hear any memories of operators who recall it.

Alexander S Kidd

SUNDAY CINEMA IN BURNLEY

I was doing some local history research at the library and saw this advert, which I thought might interest you. It ties in with Settle Sunday Cinema story I sent in a while ago. Note the Burnley Sunday Cinema Association.

Northern Daily Telegraph – January 1948; sent in by Philip Crompton



MORE CARRY ON

Sep/Oct 2019 Page 21 *Carry on, Carry On...* The text states that the *Carry On* franchise ran from 1958 to 1978. As is generally known, the *Carry Ons* were created and produced by Gerald Thomas, who had the rights to the films. To the best of my knowledge, he never licensed them and thus there was never a franchise. The films were a series and not a franchise.

Michael Jones

TALKING PICTURES TV MUSIC

Further to my letter at the bottom of p28 of the last Bulletin, which mentions that the title *Fly Past* is from the SOHOA-0127 music library. This is in fact not the case and, although there are several discs with this title, *Fly Past* is actually on the CD *Josef Weinberger Vintage Newsreel No2* disc No JWCD2042, again on the APM Music Library website. It is also track 1 on the CD, which I already have in my collection.

John R Forster

A FISHY STORY

The Newsreel item in the September/October Bulletin about the one-time *Regal* Norwich erroneously stated that it was damaged in World War II and a performing sea lion was a casualty. In fact the building concerned was the Norwich Hippodrome in St Giles Street. It is best remembered as one of one of FJ Butterworth’s chain of variety theatres but also staged repertory seasons and in the thirties was run as a cinema by ABC. It was showing films again when it suddenly closed on 27 April 1960. The bomb damage occurred on the night of 29/30 April 1942. The Hippodrome received a direct hit, resulting in the deaths of the manager and his wife, as well as sea lion trainer Bill Pedersen and his wife Dagmar – a member of the Sanger circus family. Their sea lion Buddy did in fact survive and was found a new home at Chessington Zoo but sadly died some months later owing to the impossibility of obtaining sufficient quantities of fresh fish for him.

Ray Dolling

SMALL ADS

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

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

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

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

WANTED Pre-war *Kinematograph Weekly* magazines and anything related to Bournemouth/Dorset Cinemas for our Museum at the Regent Christchurch. Happy to pay the going rates. David Eve 07717793909; [evecinema@talk21.com]

2020 Cinema Calendar

with 12 colour photos of UK cinemas taken this Century: Ashford Odeon; Bradford Marlboro; Coventry Astoria; Dudley Hippodrome; Great Barr Clifton; Leiston Film Theatre; Northenden Forum; Sevenoaks Majestic; Chapelton Picture Palace; Portswood Broadway; Stowmarket Regal; Workington Oxford. Still only £6, including postage. Please make cheque payable to Harry Rigby or simply send £5 note plus two loose first-class stamps to:

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



ARCHIVE

ARCHIVE REOPENS

The Archive is now fully open in its new premises near Southend on Sea. It is recognised that many members will be keen to visit the Archive to see the new facilities and an open day will be arranged in 2020 with tours and exhibitions for this purpose, which promises to be very interesting. As we need to assist the many researchers who have been waiting for the reopening, we cannot therefore accept casual visitors at present and visiting is by appointment only.

If you wish to make an enquiry/request for material, please visit the CTA website and use the enquiry form on the Archive pages to tell us about your research request. We will only accept enquiries using the form; if you do not have access to the Internet please phone 07971 752807 to request the form by post. The Archive website pages at [cta-uk.org] are currently being redesigned and updated and will soon contain a great deal more information, including lists of some of the collections in the Archive.

We do not want to waste your time visiting the Archive when we may not have the material you seek. Therefore your enquiry/request will be assessed against our knowledge of the material in the Archive and if there is a substantial amount of material or your enquiry requires a lot of personal research time you will be invited to the Archive to undertake your own research on one of the Saturdays the Archive is open. So we can help those needing to undertake research, visiting the Archive is by appointment only for research purposes. In most cases we can deal with your enquiry without you having to visit in person; we will scan the material you need and provide this as a link via email where you can view and download the material you requested.

To help support the cost of maintaining the Archive some reasonable charges are levied:

- Making an enquiry – free
- Visiting the Archive – free
- Each image/A4 area scanned – £1.50
- Each Image provided on CD-ROM by post – £5.00
- Photocopying – b/w 25p or colour 50p each
- Using your camera/device – £5 per visit

For general enquiries (not formal enquiries/requests) please email Clive Polden [archive@cta-uk.org].

ARCHIVE OPPORTUNITIES

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

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [tinyurl.com/y4rlq7n9] from [londonnewsonline.co.uk] about the *Granada Tooting*.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y4zg9lgy] from the *Eastern Daily Press*: eleven cinemas to visit in Norfolk.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y36utbhl] from [filmstories.co.uk] about the *Kinema in the Woods* at Woodhall Spa (Lincs).
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yxbrvnoy] from the *Plymouth Herald*: A complete history of every cinema there's ever been in Plymouth; past, present and future.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yya5ofl9] from the *Bolton Evening News*: Remembering Bolton's Golden Age of cinemas.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y3orjcx] from the *Bristol Post*: Bristol's cinemas which stood the test of time and those long gone.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y35k8ay6] from the Sheffield University website: an interview with their film unit. *Sent in by Terry Hanstock*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y435q87x] from *Time Out*: London's Best Loved Cinemas. *Sent in by Tom Laughlan.*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y5gqv6fz] A Messy Nessy page: Documenting Africa's Old Cinemas. *Sent in by John West.*

HELP THE ARCHIVE IDENTIFY CINEMAS

Please note new information!

Brian Hall posts regular weekly sets of unidentified cinema photographs on the CTA-UK Google Group. Please consider joining this group [groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/cta-uk] and help us to identify cinemas. It's great fun! If you're having trouble signing in, email me at [archive@cta-uk.org].

SENDING DONATIONS BY POST OR EMAIL

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

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

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist



MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome from all of us in the CTA to the following new members. They are listed in the order in which they joined: Mohammed (Nur) Sadiq, Norman Goodman, Michael Wright, Ian Wemyss and Stephen Harrison.

DONATIONS

Our sincere and grateful thanks are extended to these members who kindly added a donation to their subscription renewals: MA Bentley, CJ Bird, JL Briddon, LS Bull, MS Crowle, SJ Cusack, RD Dakin, PEW Day, RG Dolling, JS Downs, GB Fenwick, M Gambles, HW Gibbs, RE Howes, MF Jones, MR King, CP Kisicki, PJ Littler, A Lundgren, EL Marriage, MS Marsh, KC McFarlane, T McNamara, N Meerza, AJ North, HW Patching, AA Philip, PR Phillips, NA Pithouse, MS Plews, WR Pratt, JE Roberts, AS Rossiter, JT Rourke, TJ Smith, RC Smith, FD Snart, GW Thomas, JE Thornley, PJ Turner, JP Vaux, JP Walrond, JN Wilson.

IN MEMORIAM

We have been sorry to learn of the deaths of three CTA members in the period since the last issue of the Bulletin. Our sincere condolences are sent to their families and friends.

Roy E Heaven of St Saviour in Jersey died on 1 August at the age of 88. Formerly a projectionist, he moved to Jersey in 1962 and later worked for Channel Television. He is survived by his wife Betty, who was also a projectionist. Roy joined the CTA in 1972.

Derek Gadsby of Nuthall, Nottingham died on 23 August at the age of 87. He had been a CTA member since 1991.

The Reverend Elwyn David Evans of Pontlliw, near Swansea joined the CTA in 1996 and became a Life Member in 2000. He wrote several articles for The Bulletin in the early 00s with headings like "Vicar's Voyages". He was frequently to be seen on CTA visits until a few years ago and passed away on 25 October after a long and trying illness.

Neville C Taylor, Membership Secretary

THE SMALLEST MUSEUM IN DORSET



The smallest museum in Dorset has just doubled in size! On Friday 27 September, the Mayor of Christchurch, Lesley Dedman, together with some fellow town councillors, formally opened the newly extended Cinema Museum, situated in the projection box, situated high up on top of the roof of the Regent Centre theatre and cinema. Led by the Regent's Chairman, Gary Trinder, the Cinema Museum has been expanded to include the office attached to the back of the projection box, so the Museum now consists of two rooms. This expansion has allowed for many more historic cinema artefacts to be displayed, including the Regent's Automatic ticket machine, which for a long time, cinema-goers at the Regent will recall, was originally based in the Centre's Foyer Box Office, where it mechanically issued tiny, coloured paper tickets. The colour coding signified Adult, Child and Concessions tickets and whether the seats were in the stalls or circle.



The Mayor cuts the opening ribbon of film



Regent Volunteer and CTA member Barry Sinclair issues a ticket

There are also new displays dedicated to other historic cinemas of yesteryear that were dotted across the BCP Council conurbation, most of which are now lost to redevelopment but have never been forgotten. The Cinema Museum's existing collection of vintage 35mm celluloid projectors, lenses and sound equipment remains in place in the projection box right next to the Regent's state of the art digital projector. There are regular Cinema Museum Tours at the Regent, which allow an unrivalled insight into the golden era of the silver screen and the equipment that made this ever-popular entertainment medium. This behind-the-scenes tour includes a live demonstration of one of the vintage 35mm projectors in action and the guidance of the dedicated group of volunteers who maintain the Museum. See Events p4.



Regent Chairman Gary Trinder explains the box to local Mayors



Regent Volunteer and CTA Member John Thornley stands by to demonstrate the Simplex E7 35mm projector

