



CINEMA
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BULLETIN

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The three-screen Curzon Eastbourne, which is due to close later this year – see Newsreel p10; photo taken April 2008



The entrance to The Point Milton Keynes, for which a listing application has been refused – see Casework p5; photo taken August 2004

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I must begin with an apology to those members who tried to ring the visits registration line to book for the Bromley [etc] visit at the end of November. Unfortunately the number printed in the Bulletin visit announcement on p3 was wrong – by one digit. I gather some people checked with the CTA website and found the error but apparently most of those who got the wrong number just turned up anyway and had an enjoyable visit. I am sorry for the mistake and have flagellated myself with a wet lettuce leaf on your behalf. The correct number is printed at the bottom of the next column and will be in each Bulletin.

I am happy to have been able to include the index to last year's [2019] Bulletins. I hope you find it useful. If you would like a copy of the original Word document and/or a pdf, please email me [address opposite] or send SAE if you want a printed copy.

I have been asked again, how is it that something can appear in the Bulletin when it was sent to me after the published deadline date? I have always said that the deadline date published below [always the 20th of the month prior to publication] is the last date I will guarantee to get something in the Bulletin. I may be able to get other things in after that, depending on what it is and how far I have got with doing the layout. If I have a column inch or two to spare, I would rather put in some relevant material than a 'filler' such as an old advert or similar.

On that note, I ran into the 'multiple of four pages' restriction again this time so I have had to go up to 32 pages. Looking on the positive side, it has given me the opportunity to include some holiday snaps, a few of which I have had in store for a while. Unfortunately I have had to spread them over three places. I still have a few held over for another time but please keep them coming. I have also been able to clear my stock of 'miscellany' items. I know a couple of them are not directly related to cinemas but I hope you will find them entertaining.



On the subject of entertainment, the BBC showed the 1970 film *The Railway Children* on New Year's Eve. It reminded me of the time I saw the film at the ABC Leicester, when it was first released. As we were coming out, there was a woman mumbling to herself, "That's not Yorkshire – I've been there and I know". Funny how some things stick in your mind for years. Above is a photo I took of Oakworth Station [it really is in Yorkshire] in May 2013.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

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promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

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

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VISITS AND EVENTS

After the Final Curtain 2: America's Abandoned Theaters

Illustrated talk by Matt Lambros

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.

A Brooklyn Bite of the Big Apple

Illustrated talk by Cezar Del Valle

In the second event of this short series of presentations featuring international guest speakers, the CTA welcomes former cinema manager, distinguished theatre historian, author and tour guide Cezar Del Valle from Brooklyn, New York City. Fellow CTA member Cezar will be well known to other members who attended the two successful visits to New York organised by Ken Roe and assisted by Cezar in November 2000 'Big Theatres in the Big Apple' and in October 2007 'Another Bite of the Big Apple'. Many visitors to New York go to Manhattan and miss out on some of the real treats to be found in the other Boroughs; Bronx, Queens and Staten Island. The same is true for Brooklyn, the largest of the five Boroughs.

In this presentation Cezar will take us on a tour around these less-beaten tracks, which in 1941 had 233 cinemas operating, the most in any of the five Boroughs. Brooklyn had large movie palaces in its Downtown; Loew's Metropolitan (3,618 seats, architect Thomas Lamb – 1918) now restored as home to the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir; the Brooklyn Paramount (4,124 seats, architects Rapp & Rapp – 1928) currently being restored as a concert venue; the RKO - Keith Albee Theatre (3,246 seats, architect Thomas Lamb – 1925) demolished in 1978; the Brooklyn Fox Theatre (4,088 seats, architect C Howard Crane – 1928) demolished in 1971; the Strand Theatre (2,894 seats, architect Thomas Lamb – 1918) now repurposed and altered as a live theatre. All these and more were within a few minutes' walk of each other!

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

CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II Listed



The Grand Westbourne [Bournemouth] in May 2006

Proposals to convert the Grand in Westbourne into open-plan office spaces are to be opposed assiduously by the Association.

Historic England is reviewing the listing designation of the Picture House in Leicester. Although a rear façade comprises the only original extant feature, the CTA is to express support for retention of protected status; the local Conservation Officer endorses this stance.

A pre-application relating to planning consent appertaining to the Savoy in London's Burnt Oak has been lodged with Brent Council.



The Phoenix East Finchley [North London] in April 2006

Architects and designers are being sought to develop possible schemes to facilitate construction of a second cinema auditorium adjacent to the current single-screen Phoenix in East Finchley.

Unlisted

The Mayfair [Embassy/Gaumont] in Chadwell Heath is currently operated successfully as a wedding venue. However, it is unfortunate that permission for this utilisation has not been granted and a local group has now requested that the CTA supports opposition to the aforesaid usage as it wishes to purchase the leasehold, although no funding has been procured for that purpose. Concern arises that the building could remain unoccupied and subsequently deteriorate if the current enterprise ceases trading; furthermore it would become vulnerable to redevelopment inasmuch as it is located in close proximity to a Cross-rail station. Therefore it has been determined that a neutral stance is the appropriate response to the current circumstances.

A planning application concerning the Byron in Hucknall has been approved; it envisages two screens on each of two levels and a replacement for the current unoriginal fin. Investigation is afoot in an attempt to ascertain that retention of the admirable stained glass features is envisaged.

More Casework in the full Bulletin

THE OTHER BBC

A report of the of the CTA visit to Bromley, Bellingham and Catford on 25 November By Adam Unger

The first port of call was the Vue Bromley, which opened in November 2018, situated in the St Mark's Square development. The modest size of the entrance belies the size of this multiplex, as it is below ground, descending two floors to access most of the nine screens, (except for Screen ①, being on the first level down).



The foyer & screen ① at the Vue Bromley

We were able to view most of the screens, a total of 672 seats – screen ① being the largest with 183 seats. All the auditoria conform to the same design, with large floating screens, equipped with Sony 4K projection and Dolby Surround sound. They are well-fitted out, with an overall monochrome scheme of black and leather seating, which is very comfortable with, of course, ample legroom. As is common with some other Vues, such as Leicester Square, the foyer ceilings have the ducting and services exposed painted black.

After leaving the Vue, we walked up the High Street passing the site of the Gaumont (1936), by WE Trent, which undoubtedly was the premier cinema in the area, with a full working stage and a large seating capacity of 2,583 seats. Closure came in 1961, when much was demolished for conversion into a department store and subsequently has been divided into several retail units. The only discernible feature from the Gaumont appears to be the tiled corner elevation surviving in basic form.



The façade, foyer & screen ① at the Picturehouse Bromley

Further along the street was the Palais De Luxe / Astor, dating from 1911 and then rebuilt in the 1920s followed by modernisation in the 1950s. An interesting use came in 1948, for experiments in demonstrating large-screen television. After closure in 1977, it was converted to bingo. Following closure after this brief spell on bingo, it was demolished in the 1980s.

Just across the road, is the newly refurbished Picturehouse, which was completed in June 2019. Previously the Empire, it opened as the Odeon in 1936, designed by George Coles, seating 1,500. Earle Architects must be commended for a sensitive restoration; reinstating the full-height of the fins on the exterior, which flank the concave frontage – the new faience facing being indiscernible from the existing.



Screen ④ at the Picturehouse Bromley

The curved canopy is very sympathetic to the original, along with the signage atop. Internally, every effort has been made to reveal original features and I do recall Earle Architects contacting us to view our archive for material on the Odeon. It would be nice to think that we provided the images to have aided this restoration. The large main entrance foyer has survived intact, with a double flight of stairs, sporting attractive deco metalwork. A new floor has been laid, copying as near as possible the original geometric design. Picturehouse have added two new screens, making a total of six, the largest being Screen ① with 293 seats, which occupies the former circle level. Screen ④ below is in the former front stalls, with the original ribbed plasterwork surviving on the splay-walls and two small screens under the circle. The refurbished auditoria have enlarged screens, with mainly red seating, which enlivens the dark colour scheme. We ended up in the large café bar for refreshments, which is effectively top-lit for natural light. This area has been imaginatively incorporated as part of the cinema from an adjacent 1930s office building and displays salvaged art deco doors and panels from a demolished Co-op department store.

We then boarded a bus to Bellingham, passing on our way the site of the Splendid, Downham, a large scheme of 2,232 seats by WJ King in 1930. This was an early closure in 1957, replaced by a petrol station. We thought that we could discern some surviving boundary wall of the old cinema, in the fleeting glimpse from the bus.



The exterior of the Fellowship Inn



The auditorium at the Fellowship Inn

Arriving at The Fellowship Inn, a most interesting building, built as part of the LCC Bellingham Estate in 1923-4, in an imposing 'Stockbroker Tudor' style, by FG Newnham, the house architect for the brewery. It was designed upon 'improved' lines, this being extended community facilities of halls, games rooms and refreshment rooms. In 1963, the boxer, Henry Cooper, was temporarily residing and training at The Fellowship, with the Lower Hall being used as a cinema. By late 2017, the pub had deteriorated badly, reopening in June 2019 under new ownership and name, The Fellowship and Star. The semi-derelict building has been transformed, with the Lower Hall renamed the Bellingham Film Palace, which is still easily recognised by the original classical beamed ceiling and columns along the wall. The ceiling is effectively lit by concealed lighting panels. The auditorium has a very nice ambience, with new armchair seats that have reduced the capacity to 86. There is digital projection, which has made cinema use viable for these spaces. Other restored areas include a function room and café. The main saloon bar has also been restored, with much original woodwork and joinery surviving, including vintage tip-up seating at one of the tables – possibly from the Lower Hall.



An auditorium at the Catford Mews

Our final visit was Catford, with the opportunity to have a short lunch in the Catford Mews development before going inside the screens. This has been created by the Really Local Group, who are a local community hub in the area. The Catford Mews had also recently opened in September 2019, in the former indoor market, later Poundland. You enter a long entrance area, which seems quite austere, with various eateries ranged along a wall, before coming to the three screens, totalling 220 seats. The auditoria are well fitted-out and comfortable. Programming is done in conjunction with the Independent Cinema Office, along with consultation with the local community. In addition, there are spaces for live entertainment and exhibitions.

Such is the pace of openings, if we had of visited a year before, apart from the Vue, none of the other venues would have been open! It is very encouraging to see these new openings, with digital projection making it viable to use some spaces not practicable before.

Our thanks go to Kevin Gooding for organising the trip and to Ray Ritmeester, along with the management and staff at all the venues.

Photos by Kevin Gooding

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AND COUNTING

by Mike Whitcombe

In the mid-1990s when Associated British Cinemas briefly returned to High Streets across the land, the remaining ABC sites on the south coast would call the ABC Portsmouth each evening with their daily takings. Our duty manager would compile the figures before submitting them to a Head Office answering machine. We would often cast a critical eye over the end-of-day takings, hoping that our cinema had come out on top. One site that often seemed to finish bottom was the two-screen ABC (known by everyone as the Picturedrome) in Bognor Regis, a West Sussex seaside town where business was dependant on seasonal tourism.



The Picturedrome Bognor Regis in March 2009

Fast forward a couple of decades and the only cinema still operating from those sites that dutifully submitted their daily takings is the Picturedrome at Bognor, the site we all thought would be the first to close. Now a successful cinema owned by the local Council but run by Adam Cunard's Electric Theatre Company, it became in June 2019 one of the few cinemas in the country to accurately claim to have been a full-time picture palace for one hundred years.

By the time the Picturedrome became a full-time cinema, the building itself had already stood for over thirty years, having opened in May 1886 as the New Assembly Rooms. It was designed by local architect Arthur Smith and was built at a cost of £4,500. There was a main hall (now screen ①) and a smaller hall upstairs (now screen ③) that allowed the building to be used for a variety of community activities including shows, dancing, roller-skating and badminton. The most prominent feature, though, was the octagonal tower, which today houses screen ④. Originally this contained a revolving light operated by a boy pedalling a bicycle-type mechanism.

Film played a role at the site even during these Victorian days. Traveling showmen who saw the riches made possible by the newly invented moving pictures, often hired the building. The first moving image to be shown was in December 1897 when David Devant hired the main hall to screen a film called *The Fire Brigade Call*. It was a success and films soon became a popular part of the touring variety shows that entertained Bognor folk. In November 1909 part of Lloyd's Grand Illustrated Concert was a cinematographic record of Shackleton's voyage to the South Pole.

In August 1911 at the zenith of British Imperial power, the New Assembly Rooms were renamed the Queen's Hall to commemorate the coronation of King George and Queen Mary. At the same time, the ceiling in the main hall was lowered to improve acoustics and a customised projection box was attached to the outside of the building. Films were becoming more and more popular but when World War One broke out three years later all entertainment was stopped and the building became an army barracks.

At the end of the war, a company called The Picturedrome (Bognor) Ltd took control of the venue. Eastbourne architect Peter D Stonham, the man responsible for the Picturedrome in Worthing, now the Connaught Theatre (see Bulletin 52/5), headed the company. He was supported by two local businessmen, builder and bathing machine owner Frederick Jenkins and chemist CT Cooper.

Together, these three men turned the venue into a full-time cinema, renamed it the Picturedrome and redesigned the main hall into the auditorium we recognise today. It took just four months from when Stonham's conversion plans were submitted in February 1919 for the Picturedrome to be showing films daily.

To achieve this the screen and the projection box were reversed. The recently-built projection box was converted to an orchestra room – don't forget, films were then silent with live musical accompaniment – and a screen placed on this wall. At the rear of the auditorium four boxes were constructed, two on either side of the original proscenium arch and a new projection box built inside the arch but above the boxes. (A century later the projection room and the luxurious boxes, recently refurbished, are still in use.) The entrance into screen ① that is used today was also constructed at this time. Stonham also designed the striking glass entrance canopy, which still impresses with the Picturedrome name set in coloured glass against a sunburst pattern.



The stained glass canopy at the Picturedrome

The opening night was Thursday 5 June 1919. James Fleming, benefactor of the town's new War Memorial Hospital, performed the opening with the day's takings being donated to his cause. The first programme contained the Pathé Gazette and a British feature called *Boundary House*. This was a drama directed by British film pioneer Cecil Hepworth about a man who forces a young girl to pose as his dead wife. Alma Taylor, who in 1915 was voted more popular than Charles Chaplin by readers of *Picture and Picturegoers*, played the heroine. In June 1969 when the cinema celebrated its 50th anniversary, Taylor sent the Picturedrome a congratulatory telegram. Musical accompaniment on the night was by the Picturedrome Orchestra, conducted by Miss Beatrice Travers. John Douglas Geils, a Canadian from Winnipeg who had served during the Great War, was manager.

At this time, the Picturedrome faced competition from a cinema on the pier but in 1922 the Pier Theatre and the Picturedrome were taken over by MW Shanley and A Carter through the Bognor Pier Company. In 1930 the talkies came to Bognor when both sites were fitted with Western Electric sound. Sadly, this meant that Mrs Eve White, the Picturedrome pianist, was no longer required after ten years' faithful service.

Real cinematic competition came to the town on Saturday 14 July 1934 when Odeon opened a purpose-built cinema in nearby London Road. Incredibly, it was the fifteenth cinema opened by Odeon in less than a year. Capacity of the Odeon Bognor was 920 seats, making it one of the smaller purpose-built Odeons. But with Bognor then boasting a population of just 18,000, it was a considerable size and a threat to the 700 capacity Picturedrome. Fast becoming one of the dominant cinema circuits, Odeon could book the very best films and their site at Bognor often benefited from this. Unhindered locally by main rivals, the Odeon also screened a Gaumont release for half a week if the Odeon release itself was weak. On occasion, they would even screen a current ABC release. The first night saw Odeon founder Oscar Deutsch personally attend, accompanied by tennis star Fred Perry, who had just won Wimbledon.

Despite pressure from Odeon, the Picturedrome comfortably soldiered on until the night of 27 April 1954 when the interior was damaged by fire. The site remained closed for four months for renovation. During this time it was decided to increase the width of the screen. CinemaScope was the current rage as the film industry tried desperately to lure people away from television. While 700 new seats and new carpet were fitted, the screen was doubled in width to an impressive 30 foot.



The Odeon Bognor Regis, on bingo in March 2009

A gala reopening on Tuesday 14 September saw the first British-made CinemaScope feature hit the big screen when MGM's *Knights of the Round Table* starring Robert Taylor played a nine-day run. It would be another three months before the Bognor Odeon screened a CinemaScope presentation, even though they had their CinemaScope screen installed two days before the Picturedrome.

The Pier Theatre had stopped showing film in 1951. When the Odeon closed in 1974, the Picturedrome remained the only full-time cinema in Bognor. By then the lease of the building was owned by John Robertson. He had bought it in April 1962 and oversaw the introduction of bingo in the small hall upstairs (now screen ③). After his death in 1975, Robertson's son inherited the business and ran the cinema until July 1983 when he sold the lease to the Cannon-owned Classic Cinemas for £60,000.

The cinema was rebranded Classic in August 1983 and a series of improvements were started. This resulted in a second screen upstairs in place of the bingo hall. Classic ② opened on Friday 17 August 1984 with a screening of *Star Trek 2*, which moved from the main screen, where *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* began a successful run. In December 1985 the cinema was again renamed, this time becoming Cannon.

A series of different cinema chains then ran the Picturedrome. In the early 1990s when Cannon went bankrupt, MGM cinemas took over but retained the Cannon signage. In 1996 Virgin Cinemas, who had acquired MGM cinemas, ran the site for a few weeks before selling it, along with other High Street cinemas it owned, to the newly reformed ABC Cinemas. In November 1996 Picturedrome Theatres became the new operators before selling it to Reeltime Cinemas in 2003. Uncertainty over the future of the Picturedrome during these corporate games increased with each transfer of ownership.

A saviour was needed and in 2007 it arrived in the form of a young, enthusiastic Adam Cunard, who founded the Picturedrome Electric Theatre Company to become the new operator of the cinema. He had high hopes and high standards and within the first twelve months he claimed to have overturned a £25,000 loss into a small operating profit.

A series of events then led to the rejuvenation of the cinema, although, at first, it seemed that the cinema would close. In February 2009, the building's freeholder, The Bognor Pier Company, raised the rent paid by owner Anaid Holdings from £16,000 to £75,000. Adam Cunard, as the cinema's operator, appealed and at arbitration the adjudicator decided on an annual rent of £45,000.

This figure still spelt disaster but on 15 July 2009, while this continued to be contested, Historic England awarded the cinema Grade II listing. The reason given was that it was an "unusual example of an early cinema, which has retained its original architectural character." Special features such as the coloured glass Picturedrome sign, the external projection room, the original proscenium and the unusual survival of an early pay desk all helped with the decision. The report concluded that the Picturedrome was "notable as exemplifying an entertainment building in a traditional seaside townscape."

The listing was important as it cast a shadow over what the Freeholder could do with the property. And when the Bognor Pier Company quickly submitted plans to turn the main auditorium into three flats there was a huge public outcry, which led to an emotional public meeting in screen ① on Tuesday 1 September (see Bulletin 43/6).

The auditorium was completely full with many people forced to stand. Speaker after speaker passionately voiced their support for the cinema. Only Peter Langrish, who represented the Bognor Pier Company, believed the cinema should cease trading but he was shouted down time and time again. By the end of the evening, it was concluded that the Picturedrome was a unique public asset, a point Bognor Regis Town Council agreed with. In September 2010, the Council paid BPC £445,000 for the freehold and gave Adam Cunard the green light to continue as operator.

Ten years later and the cinema now boasts state-of-the-art projection and sound equipment and a further two auditoria. The first, seating 33, opened in the landmark octagonal tower on 26 March 2015 while the latest, a 102-seat screen attached to the rear of the building and occupying the former car park, opened on 21 December 2018 after many delays (see Bulletin 53/2). Total seating capacity in the four screens is now 544 with the auditoria numbered in relation to capacity.

Save Our Cinema Films Not Flats!



All this could be lost forever
if the planning
application is approved to turn
Bognor Regis Picturedrome
Cinema into flats

See overleaf for how you can help

Leaflet for the 2009 public
meeting that led to the
saving of the cinema.



The 85-seat screen ③ [was screen ② when photographed
in March 2009] in the former bingo space

The cinema industry has always been highly competitive. Unfortunately, many of those at the top act like mere accountants who have no feel for films and are interested only in profit margins. In such an unhelpful atmosphere, a dollop of good fortune is needed for a cinema to remain open and the Picturedrome is no exception. If the cinema hadn't had the good fortune to be run by the Robertson family during the 1960s, 70s and 80s, when local movie theatres were closing weekly, the Picturedrome might well be another forgotten statistic. And if Adam Cunard hadn't stepped in to run the cinema just over a decade ago, the building would most likely be flats with another greedy private landlord getting rich by exploiting a local community struggling to survive.

Tourist guides always concentrate on forgotten churches or dusty council chambers when extolling local virtues yet rarely mention the much loved cinema, which is often the real hub of a town. That's certainly the case with Bognor. The thriving Picturedrome is the cultural centre of this engaging seaside resort and the fact that it has been showing films for a century only confirms it. From silent movies to the talkies, from black and white to Technicolor, from John Gilbert and Clara Bow to Leonardo DiCaprio and Saoirse Ronan, the Picturedrome has proved to be a saving grace for earnest film buffs, carefree young lovers, giggling children and middle-aged couples escaping the mundane. In an uncertain world, it's a beacon of hope. Happy Centenary, Picturedrome!

Cinema photos by Harry Rigby;
Leaflets courtesy Picturedrome;
[R] Sleeve for the Picturedrome Gift Card
featuring the coloured glass
Picturedrome canopy.



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.
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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

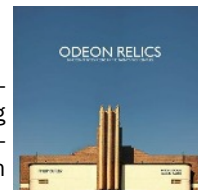
We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 2018 are £4.00 per year (6 issues), individual issues are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2019 and 2020 are £5.00 per copy. All prices include postage. There are some issues available from earlier years – 1967 to 1986. Please send enquiries to the Sales Officer.

Recently Published

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.



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.

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

CINEMAS IN BRITAIN

A **MUST** for your collection

A History of Cinema Architecture

by Richard Gray

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

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

Special price for CTA members

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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

ASHFORD (Kent)

English Heritage has confirmed that the former Odeon will not be listed. Despite a number of criteria being met, including its importance to the area's history and people, it was found not to meet the necessary requirement for architectural importance. The cinema opened in August 1936 and closed in August 1975. It became a bingo hall in 1976, which closed in July 2018. It is likely that the building will be partially demolished and replaced with an outdoor screen, food and retail units and 61 homes. {14785}

Kent Online – 1, 5 November; sent in by Philip Stevens

ASHINGTON (Northumberland)



The bingo operation in the former Pavilion closed on 11 November. Previously run by Gala, it had for the last 14 months been operated by Hay Bingo. The cinema opened in 1919 with about 1,000 seats in stalls and circle. There was a large stage and fly tower. It began part-time bingo in 1961 but went full-time around 1967. {44171}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken October 2006

AYLSHAM (Norfolk)



The former County has become a gymnasium. The **COUNTY** name has been restored to the building. It opened in September 1937 and films ceased in September 1960. It became a youth centre, which had closed by 2000. {50410}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken July 2007

BASILDON (Essex)

Clearance work has re-started on the site for a ten-screen Empire cinema after the previous construction company went into administration in October. The Council is working to procure a new main contractor.

Basildon Echo – 5, 12 November

BEESTON (Notts)

A contractor has been appointed for the new eight-screen Arc cinema. Work was due to start on 25 November; completion is expected by the end of 2020.

Nottingham Post – 2, 22 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

BIDEFORD (Devon)

Further to the announcement on p18 of the last Bulletin that a four-screen cinema is planned for the Affinity shopping centre, the operator is to be Scott Cinemas.

Sent in by Tim McCullen

BIRMINGHAM (Five Ways)

The twelve-screen Odeon Luxe at Broadway Plaza has opened a Dolby Cinema in screen ③.

Birmingham Live – 9 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

BO'NESS (Falkirk)



The Hippodrome is to receive a grant of more than £60,000 from Screen Scotland for technical improvements. The projector and audio equipment will be upgraded and equipment installed for audio described screenings.

Falkirk Herald – 15 December; photo taken September 2008

BOURNEMOUTH

The ten-screen Odeon in the Bh2 leisure complex was forced to close for two days in early November due to an electrical fault. {55149}

Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 4 November; sent in by John R Forster & Philip Stevens

Permission to convert the Grade II listed former Grand in Westbourne into a gym and flats has been rejected. The cinema opened in December 1922 and films finally ceased in October 1977. It was last used as a bingo club. See Casework p5. {22430}

Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 24 October, 2 December; sent in by John R Forster & Sally McGrath

BRIGHTON

The Grade II listed Duke of York's is currently undergoing a restoration. However, just two days after scaffolding came down, a newly-painted wall was daubed with graffiti. {2433}

The Argus, Brighton – 6, 9 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

BRISTOL

A three-screen cinema will be part of the redevelopment of the St Catherine's Place shopping centre in Bedminster. The operator will be Scott cinemas, who run the three-screen Orpheus cinema in Henleaze.

Bristol Property Live – 7 November

BROMBOROUGH (Wirral)



The eleven-screen Odeon is to become an Odeon Luxe. It will have a 12m wide iSense screen. {24286} photo taken July 2007

Wirral Globe – 23 October; Chester & District Standard – 28 November

CHORLEY (Lancs)

The new six-screen Reel opened on 20 December to coincide with the new *Star Wars* film. Housed in an extension to the Market Walk shopping centre, this has five 'Première' screens (with 164, 139, 99, 78 & 64 seats) and a 39-seat 'VIP Lounge', which offers food and drink in an all-inclusive ticket. This is the first commercial cinema in the town since the Plaza / Studios 1-4 closed way back in August 1986, although the Chorley Theatre (ex-Empire) includes films in its (mostly live) programme.

Chorley Citizen – 5 November; sent in and additional information by David Simpson

CLEVEDON (Somerset)

A £99,999 grant has been made available by the National Lottery to the Grade II listed Curzon Cinema, which aims to reach its £600,000 target so work can begin to restore its leaky roof at the end of February; it was £43,000 short at the time of this report. {846}

North Somerset Times – 19 December

CLITHEROE (Lancs)

A four-screen Everyman opened on 18 October in Holmes Mill. This late Victorian, Grade II listed former textile mill was already home to many attractions, including a food hall, boutique hotel and Bowland Brewery. The usual luxurious auditoria have 31, 31, 72 and 122 seats. {61173}

Sent in by David Simpson

COATBRIDGE (North Lanark)



Showcase launched its de Lux brand in Scotland in October at their fourteen-screen 3,950-seat multiplex near Glasgow, following a refurbishment. {27009}

Daily Record – 11 November; sent in by Tom Laughlan; photo taken July 2009

COLCHESTER (Essex)

After two failed attempts, plans have finally been approved for the Tollgate Village at Stanway. The project includes a multiplex cinema.

Essex Live – 5 November

CORK (Ireland)

The thirteen-screen Omniplex in the Mahon Point shopping centre has withdrawn an application for an alcohol licence due to concerns from local residents. This is the second time this has happened in four years. {53279}

Evening Echo (Cork) – 2 December

COVENTRY



A local graphic artist has been researching the history of the Standard/Godiva and produced some drawings of what it would have been like in its heyday: [tinyurl.com/w44uh4r]. It opened in July 1938 with 1,350 seats in stalls and a very steeply-raked circle.

In 1965 the 500-seat Godiva cinema was created in the circle while shops and a bank were created in the former stalls. The Godiva closed in September 1976 and then spent five years as a bingo club. It later became a casino and then a church. Alterations and mobile phone masts had made the original façade unrecognisable when the above photo was taken in March 2006. Your editor remembers seeing many a 70mm film on the Godiva's huge screen, with poor legroom in the steep steepings. {37905}

Coventry Live – 16 November

DUNFERMLINE (Fife)

A planning application for change of use of 25 New Row had been submitted. It was to be the venue for a new 66-seat Unicorn Cinema. However, "issues" with the premises scuppered the move. There are now plans to reopen the former Robins cinema.

Dunfermline Press & West of Fife Advertiser – 31 October, 12 December

DURHAM

Everyman is to increase the number of screens at its new cinema being built at Milburngate from three to four; the footprint will stay the same. No opening date has been given.

Northern Echo – 5 December

EASTBOURNE (East Sussex)

It has been confirmed that the three-screen Curzon will close at some point after this summer and is unlikely to make its 100th birthday in December, although it has pleaded for public support to reach this milestone. It says that business has been "killed" by the new multiplex at The Beacon. The house manager said, "Two weeks ago there was no one here one evening, three screens were empty. We closed at 8pm, which we never do. One Saturday night there were only four people in a 500-seat screen for a big film, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. It's very sad." The cinema first opened as the Picture-drome in December 1920; it had 1,100 seats. It has been put on the market for £2.25m. {24677} photo on front cover

Eastbourne Herald – 1, 2, 5, 18, 22 November; sent in by Geoff Gill & Bob Skinner

AE writes: Crispin Lilly, the head of Everyman, inspected the Curzon with his property adviser in late November and informs me that "the building would clearly make a beautiful Everyman venue. Unfortunately, however, the scale of the task is simply too large and would be prohibitively expensive".

ECCLES (Greater Manchester)



The Grade II listed Crown Theatre was destroyed by fire on 1 December. At its height, more than 35 firefighters tackled the blaze. It was too dangerous to go inside so water jets were used from above. All that remains is the brick outer shell; everything internal – flooring, staircases, balconies and even the roof – has gone. It opened in February 1899 and the first Bioscope films were screened the following month. It became a cinema in 1932, just in time for the 'talkies'. Films ceased in 1963 in favour of bingo, which closed in December 2003. The building had been empty since. Permission had been granted to convert it into 82 flats, retaining the façade. {2055}

Manchester Evening News, BBC News – 1 December;
sent in by Terry Rourke; photo taken July 2005

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

LETTERS

TAUTOLOGY

In the November Bulletin, I noticed some examples of tautology. 'Revert back': Revert does not need the addition of the word 'back'. 'Back' is in the meaning of the word 'revert'. Simply it should be 'reverted to'. (Gymbox/Odeon page 15). Similarly, 'Rewinding back' (page 16): 'Back' is in the meaning of the word 'rewind'.

Michael Jones

EVEN MORE OF A CARRY ON

While I agree with Michael Jones, who states in his letter (Bulletin 53/6 – 'More Carry On') that the *Carry On* films were never franchised according to the dictionary definition of the word, which is "the licence to make or sell a product or provide a service" he seems not to realise that for some reason the word 'franchise' is now being used increasingly often to describe a batch of films or television shows as in 'The Harry Potter franchise' instead of 'series' or even 'canon' as in 'The Sherlock Holmes canon'. Another word whose incorrect use irritates me is 'concessions' used to describe the confectionery, drinks and snacks available from what were traditionally termed 'sales kiosks' in cinemas. 'Concession', a noun, is actually "a discounted ticket price" or "the right to sell a product in a particular area" but even Allen Eyles misuses it as in "the concessions counter". Of course we are constantly assailed with Americanisms – films are now invariably 'movies', shown in 'movie houses'. "Hiya, y'all!"

PS: The producer of the *Carry On* series was Peter Rogers, not Gerald Thomas, who was the director the series. (For the very last – *Carry On Columbus* – Mr Rogers was the executive producer.)

Raymond Dolling

May I elaborate on Michael Jones' letter on page 26 of the last Bulletin? The *Carry On* films were most definitely a series and not a franchise. At the time that most were made, the word franchise was unknown for film use. The films were created by producer Peter Rogers and director Gerald Thomas, not just Gerald Thomas. The two men shared an office at Pinewood Studios and turned a one-off film made in 1958, *Carry On Sergeant*, into the massively successful series, rivalling the Bond films in number if not in budgets. They owned the rights to the films they made, nothing more. When Peter Rogers died, these rights passed to the Film & Television Charity, formerly the Cinema & Television Benevolent Fund.

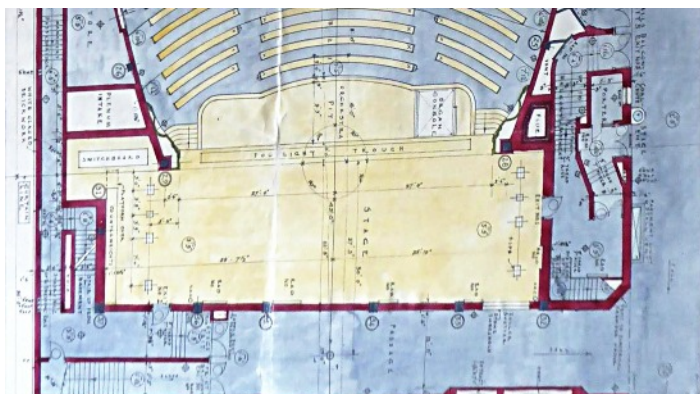
Tony Williams

Michael Jones' letter in the Nov/Dec issue, states that Gerald Thomas created and produced the *Carry Ons*. It was actually Peter Rogers who produced the series and held the rights – also very tight purse strings on the budget for these films. Gerald Thomas directed all 31 of the films made. On a personal note, I worked on the compilation series of *Carry Ons* for television and have happy memories of working with Gerald, who I found to be most charming.

Adam Unger

NEWCASTLE PARAMOUNT

I was pleased to read the article on the Newcastle Paramount by David A Ellis in the last but one Bulletin and the subsequent letter by Neil Thompson. One thing had me reaching for the plans though, the mention of the stage being thirty foot deep which sounded more than I remembered. (It wasn't, it was 22ft 3in from the proscenium line to the back wall, with 3ft forward of it to the orchestra pit but half of that was the footlight trough).

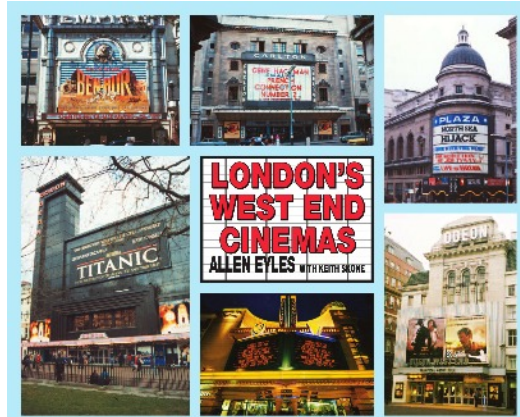


London's West End Cinemas

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.

Here is a snip of the lodged plan [bottom previous column] a full set of which is available at the Discovery Museum archives. On re-reading the article, it actually refers to the proscenium depth as being 30', what many would interpret as height. It must have been cramped to stage ciné-variety with no scene dock and not too much wing space back in the 1930s, although a 60ft grid meant that flying of cloths was possible. I also imagine that the original screen assembly didn't take up quite as much stage depth as the one I was familiar with (from memory, six counterweight sets) even though it had Magnascope.

One other comment I would like to make is on the conversions. The initial 1975 tripling was a standard drop-wall job, which left the front stalls intact and usable for capacity crowds. The stage was also intact and sometimes used, however it rapidly fell out of favour for touring shows due to the reduced capacity and compromised acoustics. Screen ④ was eventually created from the front stalls and stage area in 1980, with the screen for the main house being located partially above and in front of the original proscenium on the roof of the new screen. The building has been gone since 2017 (and dark since 2002) but many happy memories remain. {3307}

Ian Grey

COLLAPSE OF THOMAS COOK TRAVEL

The collapse of Thomas Cook reminded me of the former Essoldo Cinema in Granby Street, Leicester. This was a former Temperance Hall where Thomas Cook organised his first excursion. It was a day trip from Leicester to Loughborough, a distance of ten miles and cost one shilling (5p in today's money). I have seen the date given as 1841 but this needs to be confirmed. It had been in use since the 1920s. I remember it as the Princes in the mid-1950s but it changed its name to the Essoldo in 1956. It closed and was demolished in 1960. It was noted as a family house and was entered by the side of the screen, so the noise from the screen blasted you. {61427}

Ian Patterson

Two more pages of letters
in the full Bulletin

HOLIDAY SNAPS



① & ② These two cinemas are in France, in the Burgundy area. **le tivoli** is in a small town called Charolles. From what I could see of the foyer the interior has been modernised and the entrance now has wheelchair provision, so thriving with a commercial programme. **La Palette** is in Tournus, a larger town in between Beaune and Mâcon. The cinema was created in what had been a passage between the main commercial road in the town centre and a road behind. This had specialised programming.

Tony Williams



⑤ This is the **Aurora Kino** in Kirkenes, Norway. It's not the best looking cinema I have ever seen but it does have the distinction of being the furthest north on the European mainland!

David Barker



③ & ④ In Athens in May, I visited the rooftop open air cinema **Ciné Paris**, which was built in the early 1920s. Attractively located, with a view of the Parthenon and also has a bar at the rear; very useful in the warm evenings! Saw the film *Anon* there, which was showing a week before it opened in the UK.

Doug Raynes