



CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

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

# BULLETIN

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May / June 2020



The former Picture Palace at Dudley Hill in Bradford, which has had an application for an illuminated advertising board refused. See Newsreel p15. Photo taken August 2005.



The Artrix arts centre in Bromsgrove (Worcs) which has ceased trading – see Newsreel p16. Photo taken March 2008.



## FROM YOUR EDITOR

When I started preparing this Bulletin – soon after receiving the last one in mid-March, ‘lockdown’ was just being threatened. I received dozens of press cuttings about steps cinemas were taking; they are too many to mention individually but they all had the same aim – to prevent the spread of this nasty virus. Some cinemas asked their patrons to sit in a checkerboard pattern to maintain social distancing; some sold only 50% of their seats. At least one cinema resorted to taking the temperature [non-invasively] of people coming through its doors. Then suddenly the government closed restaurants, pubs and all places of entertainment. Some building projects were put on hold and new cinemas that were due to open didn’t! Independent cinemas and major circuits alike wondered how they would survive. Some operators sold off their stocks of popcorn and sweets at the kerbside, some asked patrons to donate their admission money to the cinema or organised fund-raising appeals. Publicly listed cinema chains saw the value of their shares plummet. Distributors halted the release of new films, like the new *James Bond*. Some renters said they would allow films to go immediately to online streaming services. Strange measures in strange times.

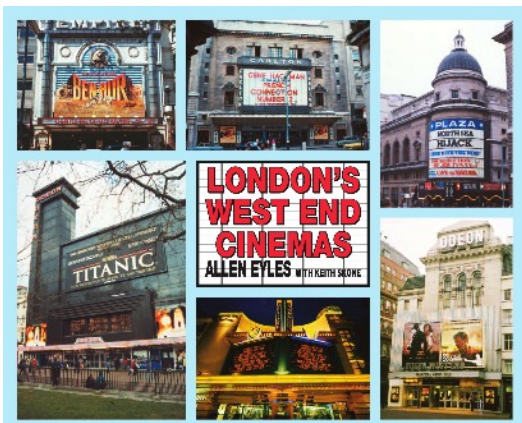
As I was finishing this Bulletin, better news was beginning to trickle in. Some cinemas abroad have reopened. In this country some building work has recommenced. I hope for and expect more positive news by the time you read this. Elsewhere in this issue are three articles on the effect of the virus on cinemas. Let’s hope it’s over soon.

I would like to thank our printers, Ludo Press, for producing this Bulletin under difficult circumstances. I know they are able to do some work from home and are going into the factory one at a time in rotation to actually produce the printed issue. I have kept it slightly smaller than normal but have still been able to include nearly all the regular features – including some holiday snaps at last! I have sent the proofs to Ludo earlier than usual but I’m sure you will appreciate why if there is a delay before you receive it through your letterbox.

*Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor*

## London’s West End Cinemas by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.

Large format paperback, 210 pages, fully illustrated  
with over 400 pictures, including 71 in colour.  
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.

## DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE SATURDAY 20 JUNE

## CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

Visits' registration hotline ansaphone : 020 8800 8393

## VISITS AND EVENTS

As Visits & Events are one of the most popular items included in membership of the CTA, we are really sorry that due to the current Covid-19 epidemic, we have been forced to cancel all planned visits and events for the foreseeable future. We hope we managed to notify you via a leaflet slipped inside the last edition of the Bulletin regarding upcoming events and you were not inconvenienced with your plans by such a sudden decision, which was totally out of our hands.



Built in 1901 as the Surf Avenue Opera House. Now Coney Island USA, a museum, bar and live entertainment venue which screens classic films and hosts the Coney Island Film Festival.  
Photo by Ken Roe, September 2015. {50172}

The good news is that we will be back as soon as circumstances make it possible to proceed. The talk by Cezar Del Valle from New York A *Brooklyn Bite of the Big Apple* will be rescheduled, as will the Double Bill of Illustrated Talks *Abandoned Cinemas of the World* by Simon Edelstein from Geneva, Switzerland and *Robert W Paul – Origins of the British Cinema* by Professor Ian Christie and also the CTA Annual General Meeting. These events will take place at the earliest convenience and when dates are known they will be published in following editions of CTA Bulletin and also on the CTA Website [www.cta-uk.org]. The CTA E-News sent out by e-mail to members who have signed up to receive them will also be another source of information.

The six-day visit *Movie Magic 'Round the Moor* scheduled for 1-6 June and organised by David Vinnels has been cancelled for the time being, as has *An Archival Day at the Seaside* organised by David Simpson and CTA Archivist Clive Polden, which was scheduled for 27 June.

Looking further ahead, a presentation that has not been previously advertised and is in the planning stage is an illustrated talk by Jean-François Chaput from Paris. Jean-François is a former projectionist (last working at the wonderful Chinese-style La Pagode Cinema, in Paris). He has been taking photographs of Paris cinemas in the 1970s and 1980s during a period when they were either being closed and demolished or converted into several screens and these will be the basis of his talk. Jean-François is also preparing a book on the subject, which will be published soon. We look forward to welcoming him and all other presenters.

Looking forward to seeing you all again in the near future. In the meantime – Keep Safe and Stay Well.

Ken Roe

## CIRCUIT HISTORIES AVAILABLE

### REDUCED PRICES

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

All available from the Sales Officer – address on p5.  
please add £3.00 for postage.

## CINEMA IN A TIME OF COVID-19

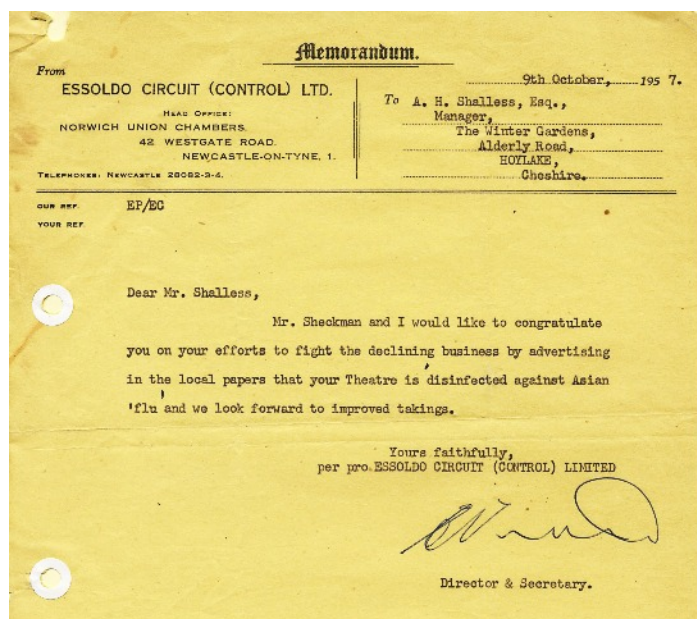
### By David Trevor-Jones, CTA Chairman

Normally at this time I would be thinking about my annual 'sermon'. For the members who don't regularly attend the AGM, I have come to use my Chairman's report slot to deliver some thoughts about the state of the Association and the future. These are unscripted but carefully thought through and our Secretary, Adam Unger, has a task – always discharged admirably – to jot down a summary for the minutes. This year, though, the AGM is postponed and we are all preoccupied with the biggest issue, probably, that we have ever had to face. For the first time since 1939, when all cinemas in the UK closed for a week on the outbreak of World War II except in Aberystwyth – and there lies a tale – all of our cinemas are closed. Four weeks on as I write this and counting, this is already the longest complete closure since the dawn of the industry.

Sequestered at home, I have been too busy to catch up with any of the cinema that is popping up online. It is intriguing and heartening to see how arts communities are responding with all sorts of online experiences. Oh to have time to catch up with some obscure silent films through the BFI website! I am sure that many members are finding the time to watch those DVDs bought with every intention but for which the right moment has never come, or the films recorded at the dead of night from television to be watched off-air at that more convenient moment that has never arrived. Maybe now I finally do have time to re-watch the entire *Inspector Morse* cannon, as I have long promised myself I will do. But will cinema online become the new normal?

When this is all over, when life finally returns to a kind of normality, will we flock back to the cinema? Will it still be there to flock to? Elsewhere in this issue Allen Eyles has documented the sudden extinction of UK cinema-going and Giles Woodforde has skilfully summarised the fascinating and moving story of the great freak wave of Covid-19 breaking out of nowhere over the Rex at Elland, captured by chance for the Radio 4 series *The Patch*. Charles Morris reflects that the cinema survived both world wars and two big flu epidemics. "It has a sense of permanence about it, hasn't it" he concludes. We all wish him well and all other cinema operators, independent and otherwise. This is going to be tough for them, maybe a lot tougher than we could possibly have imagined on 20 March when the Prime Minister announced the pubs and restaurants closure.

Will the audience flock back? Yes, it will. I forecast a huge, pent-up yearning for going out, for getting out of the house, away from its confines and those of the TV and computer screens. The joy of being out with and alongside people, with friends and loved ones and in an audience. That is the enduring attraction of cinema. It's the very fact that it is not our living room. Best wishes to all of our exhibitors, managers and their staff and to all CTA members – take care, stay well, keep smiling!



Letter from Essoldo during the 1957 Asian Flu epidemic; sent in by Charles Morris



# 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	<b>Special Issue</b> featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; <b>Ideal</b> Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; <b>Granada</b> Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; <b>Albert Hall</b> Sheffield; <b>Regal</b> Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Committee's Choice; Gaumont Managers; <b>Carlton</b> Swansea.
No 26	£4.50	<b>Paramount</b> Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; <b>Electric</b> Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New <b>Victoria/Apollo</b> ; <b>Whiteladies</b> Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; <b>Torbay Cinema</b> ; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; <b>Apollo</b> Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: <b>Essoldo</b> – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the <b>Essoldo</b> Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New <b>Victoria</b> Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	<b>Beaufort</b> Birmingham; <b>Granada</b> Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophone lighting; Imitations of Odeon; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; The <b>Clifton</b> Circuit; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the <b>Electric Palace</b> Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated Cinemas; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; <b>Palace</b> Conwy; <b>Carlton</b> Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two <b>Regals</b> ; Odeon North Finchley; <b>Majestic</b> Oxford; Films at the <b>Royal Albert Hall</b> .
No 40	£6.00	<b>Tolmer</b> Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham – a <b>Granada</b> man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary; <b>Plaza</b> Stockport; <b>Majestic</b> Leeds; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Pascal J Stienlet.
No 42	£6.00	Odeon Elephant & Castle, <b>Plaza</b> Crosby; <b>Depot</b> Lewes; <b>Cineworld</b> Chelsea; Gaumont Sheffield Figures.
No 43	£6.00	Virgin Cinemas; Peter Jewett's ABC memories; <b>Scala</b> Kings Cross; <b>Picture House</b> Campbelltown; Beeston/Nottingham memories.
No 44	£6.00	Village Cinemas of NE Scotland; William Keys' career; Bernard Snowball's memories.

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.

### 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.

Ordering details on p5.

## New Publications

***The Matcham Directory* by Michael Sell. 114 pages, paperback, fully illustrated. £10 plus postage.**

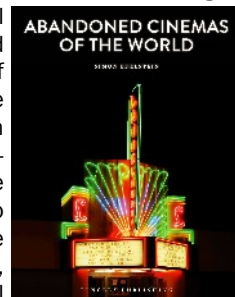
Frank Matcham (1854-1920) was one of the most prolific and successful theatre architects of his generation and in the centenary year of his death, the Frank Matcham Society has published this excellent and comprehensive guide to his work. After an entertaining introduction by John Earl, there is a directory of the UK from A to Z detailing all of his theatres and also many unfulfilled projects. As well as theatres, Matcham designed around six cinemas in his later years, one of which – the **Palace** at Aldershot – is still extant, as well as shopping arcades, halls and even street layouts. There is also a chronology of his life and a section by Richard Norman about Matcham on film. The book is comprehensively illustrated by many rare and unusual views of the theatres.



***Abandoned Cinemas of the World* by Simon Edelstein. 288 pages, hardback, fully illustrated.**

**Special Price: £29.50 plus postage. (Normal RRP £34.99)**

An outstanding photographic report that draws attention to the often dramatic fate of the world's abandoned cinemas. Veteran photographer Simon Edelstein has spent 12 years travelling the world – including the USA, France, Italy, India, Morocco and Cuba – in search of abandoned cinemas. Visiting far-flung cities, he discovered forgotten buildings whose timeworn façades still hint of their former glory. These once-proud movie palaces, languishing under decades of dust, are far removed from their classic role as magnets for Saturday night crowds. With his magnific focus on their ageing façades, entrances and interiors, Edelstein brings these cinemas and their splendid histories back to life. This book is a tribute to reminders of the golden age of movie theatres the world over, now silent but not forgotten. Some successful restorations and re-uses are also featured and there are some UK cinemas included as well. The photographs are mainly exterior shots but with quite a few interiors as well.



## Recently Published (reviewed in last Bulletin)

***After the Final Curtain Volume 2:***

***America's Abandoned Theatres***

**by Matt Lambros**

**Special reduced price £29.99 plus postage.**

**(RRP normally £34.99)**

**Also available:** *After the Final Curtain Volume 1: The Fall of the American Movie Theatre: £29.99 plus postage.*

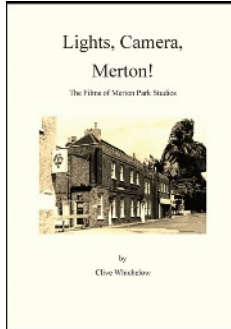
## Ordering

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)

*Lights, Cameras, Merton! The films of Merton Park Studios* by Clive Whichelow. 176 pages, paperback, illustrated. ISBN 978-0952429746. £9.99 Available through Amazon, etc or from the publisher: Enigma Publishing, 4 Charnwood Avenue, London, SW19 3EJ, (adding £1.95 for postage)

This is a listing of the films made at Merton Park Studios, in SW London, from the 1930s to the 1970s. J Arthur Rank began his career here and amongst other unusual facts in the book are that Walt Disney made a film here; a British answer to *King Kong* was filmed here and Stalin's favourite film as well. Famous TV series such as *Scales of Justice*, *Scotland Yard* and *Edgar Wallace* were also made here along with government propaganda films and one of the earliest gay films! (Thanks to Ian Mitchell for suggesting this book.)



## THE BRITISH ENTERTAINMENT HISTORY PROJECT

### By Derek Threadgall

Since 1987, The British Entertainment History Project has been recording the stories of men and women who have worked in the film, television, radio and theatre industries. Currently the Project has over 750 interviews comprising a unique oral and video history collection, which will be of lasting value to fans, enthusiasts, researchers, academics and members of the public who wish to know more about a particular interviewee.

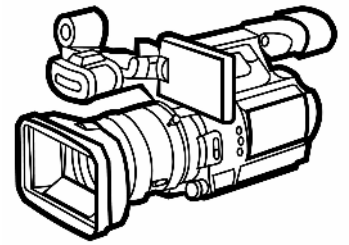
Our interviews reflect the careers and life-stories of a wide range of contributors to the British world of entertainment, including: directors, cinematographers, designers, technicians, laboratory workers, projectionists, hair and makeup artists, costumiers, actors, actresses, musicians and many others. Interviews were recorded initially on audio tape but are now recorded on more modern means of shooting video material. We are in the process of digitising all our interviews and many of them can now be accessed directly via the Project's website [www.historyproject.org.uk]. Everything that has been achieved by the History Project has been achieved entirely by a team of volunteers drawn from the industries represented by the Project.

The Project began in 1987 when a small group of workers in the British film and television industries in London under the guidance of producer/director, Roy Fowler, set about collecting and archiving the oral testimonies of workers in the entertainment industry. They called themselves 'The ACTT History Project' (later, 'The BECTU History Project' and now, 'The British Entertainment History Project'). Fearing that the story of British filmmaking would disappear for ever with the passing of industry pioneers, the Project's volunteers set about the task with urgency. Over the years the Project has grown into an archive of international importance. We celebrated our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in March 2017.

Our interviews vary in length. For example film director Lewis Gilbert's interview runs for thirteen and a half hours on audio tape. Hazel Ascot, who was Britain's pre-war Shirley Temple, tells the story of her life in a short, remarkable, forty minutes interview on camera. Her two pre-World



War II films made at Sound City Studios, now Shepperton Studios, saved the studio from bankruptcy. Unfortunately for Hazel, the outbreak of that war cancelled out a third planned film. Dave Prowse revealed stories of his iconic role as Darth Vader in the early *Star Wars* films. All new interviewees automatically join this illustrious



and unique collection; all interviewees receive their free personal DVD copy of their interview. Where and when interviews take place is often a moveable feast. The interviewee generally chooses where they would prefer to be interviewed, be it in their home, office, on set, in their 'local', or an outside venue of their choice. The interviewer will come to the interviewee at a convenient time for them. The interview is uploaded to the Project's website together with a photograph of the interviewee and a summary of their interview for interested parties to sample before going into the main interview. Through these rare interviews, 'The British Entertainment History Project' has tapped into a rich vein of oral evidence of working practices and experiences that otherwise could be lost over time. The Project encourages suggestions for interviewees who have a story to tell and from individuals interested in assisting the Project to continue this fascinating work.

Interviewees include Richard and David Attenborough, David Puttnam, Dave (Darth Vader) Prowse, Sheila Hancock, John Schlesinger, Sir Sydney Samuelson CBE, Britain's first British Film Commissioner, Lew Grade, Virginia McKenna, Karel Reisz, Pete Murray, Lindsay Anderson, Doug Allan (Wildlife cameraman), Jenny Barraclough OBE, whose career in film and television covers more than 50 years and Jack Hollinshead, whose BBC staff membership goes back longer than any other living person. He joined the BBC in Manchester as a sound effects boy in 1930.

The first interview took place on 6 March, 1987, with cameraman Eric Cross, who was born in 1902. His working life started in silent films in the 1920s at Twickenham Studios. The archive's earliest memory features in an interview with Adolph Simon, born in 1895 who recalled filming in 1914 for Pathé News.

Currently, members of the Project have begun retrieving the audio and video tapes from the archive and are tackling the huge task of transferring, digitising and uploading to the Project's website the 750 existing interviews (with many more to follow). Now the current generation of volunteers can really begin to fulfil the vision of the original History Project pioneers – to make these valuable recordings accessible to future generations. Says Project Chair, Mike Dick, "It seems inevitable that, upon reaching a certain age, we begin to look back over our lives and those who came before us; today, modern technology tools, such as mobile phones, e-mails and Skype are quickly replacing our personal diaries, written letters and paper records. Suddenly, we realise that so much could be lost and forgotten unless we act now to preserve our memories and our experiences".

Derek Threadgall. Telephone: 01245 259806 or 07712 378320  
E-Mail: [dthreadgall1165@gmail.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



# HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

## Grade II\* Listed



Somewhat gratifyingly, advice from the Association is being sought by Islington London Borough Council relating to planning and listed building consent applications concerning the **Carlton**. These submissions include a pavilion upon the roof and a passenger lift within the extant public areas. *Photo taken September 2004.*

The projected cost of renovation of the **Granada** in Walthamstow has increased by five million pounds; this additional expenditure is necessitated by asbestos removal. Given the recognised prevalence of that material in multiple applications within cinemas of this period, it is noteworthy that consideration of this issue is so often under-estimated during budgetary analysis for such schemes.

A new application for alterations to the **Dome** in Worthing has been submitted, which conflates several previous proposals. These include an extension to a toilet block, new signage on the façade and improvements to the car park. Of greater concern to the CTA is alteration to the recently introduced entrance structure to the screen, situated within the former shop, the configuration of which does not conform to approved designs and which has previously occasioned forceful objection.

## Grade II Listed



The developer of the **Savoy** in Burnt Oak is fortunate to be endowed with sufficient financial liquidity to have remunerated Historic England to expedite its report on the building, a resource regrettably lacking from a considerable majority of organisations promoting preservation. A pre-application details intentions of creating unattractively termed 'pocket-living units' and an extension to one flank of the structure. See Newsreel p17. *Photo taken September 2006.*

Structural investigation of the **Rio** in Dalston has revealed that the original plasterwork of the foyer ceiling survives above a later interpolation. An aspiration to fully restore the area has thus been galvanized.



The scenario surrounding the future of the **Longford** in Stretford has previously been described as a saga in this column; it continues. A proposal has been tabled for temporary conversion to a roller-skating rink, which would entail introduction of new fenestration to the walls of the auditorium. It is also reported that Trafford Council is attempting to secure finance in order to purchase the property compulsorily. *Photo taken August 2005.*

## Unlisted

Historic England had decreed that sale of the **Picturedrome/Curzon** in Eastbourne does not constitute a threat to its future; consideration of the repercussions of many prior disposals of cinema properties serves to highlight the nescience underlying this statement. The Association is to canvass for a Conservation Area to be extended to include this building and the nearby **Luxor**. Fortuitously the local Conservation Officer exhibits a favourable stance upon the building's future, although the Civic Society has eschewed engagement.



The **Royal** in Plymouth is located within a Conservation Area and has been designated an Asset of Community Value, yet a pre-application for development has been submitted. A robust local campaign group is to object vociferously and will receive the wholehearted support of the CTA. *Photo taken June 2008.*



The **Odeon/Stafford**, in the latter eponymous town, was offered at auction in February but failed to reach its reserve price of one quarter of a million pounds. This small yet attractive cinema by architect Roland Satchwell has been operated during the recent period by a local enthusiast who has established a trust with the intent of safeguarding the venue as a resource for the local community. *Photo taken May 2008.*



# THE REX ELLAND FACES COVID-19

By Giles Woodforde

It's every reporter's dream to discover a strong story and then be allowed to follow it through in real time as events unfold. This dream came true for Polly Weston of BBC Radio 4's *The Patch* programme<sup>1</sup> when she visited Elland in West Yorkshire.

The programme's remit, as billed by *Radio Times*, is to visit "a location randomly selected by a postcode generator". "I've got HX5 0," announces Polly's producer over the phone as the programme begins. "Where's that? Halifax, I reckon." "Elland," says Polly after checking. Light dawns on the producer: "What's the series called, the one with the drugs? *Happy Valley*?"

The producer had got the right geographical area but Polly quickly homes in on the real Elland and in particular on the Rex Cinema, which receives devastating news as she records her story. What follows is my summary of the rest of the programme but including the comments of the Rex's owner, Charles Morris, in full, as transmitted on air.

"It sounds remarkable," says Polly when she is first told about the Rex, "Very old, with an organist, cups of tea in mugs – and this is the thing that really gets me – an interval." How long does the interval last? "Until everybody has got an ice cream!" replies Rex manager Michelle – who later admits that she was ordered out of the cinema in her youth for unruly behaviour. Polly's first visit coincides with the Rex's free tea and biscuit screening, popular with pensioners. "You only get one biscuit, mind," remarks one patron.

"I'd never heard or seen anything like it," says Polly, who has obviously become enticed by the Rex's warm, cheerful atmosphere. She adds: "I had no idea how poignant all this would soon become". As Michelle shows Polly round the cinema she mentions that the local multiplexes have recently dropped their prices to £4.99, so at £5.50 the Rex is no longer the cheapest cinema around. Polly also meets 80-year-old Mildred, one of the two organists – Mildred reveals that she was first courted by her late husband at the Rex in 1957.

Price cutting by the multiplexes proves to be an ominous sign of trouble ahead. Polly first spoke to Charles Morris on the day Italy shut down. Was he worried about Coronavirus?

"As long as we can get through this sticky patch, we'll be fine," he replied. "[Coronavirus] concerns me in the sense that there is so much hype and hysteria about it. It has affected us in two ways already. The film distributors have postponed the release of the new James Bond film *No Time to Die* and only today I've heard that Sony Pictures have postponed the release of *Peter Rabbit 2*. It leaves a bit of a hole in our schedules. [Also] people might decide that the cinema, as a public gathering place, is somewhere that perhaps they wouldn't be able to come. The perceptions of people and a shortage of films to show are the more worrying things."

Polly adds: "It sounds daft now but what was coming hadn't really registered with any of us yet." Manager Michelle at first felt that large-scale venues would be shut down but not 300-seaters like the Rex. But soon co-organist Ben was getting concerned that all his preparatory work for a forthcoming silent Laurel and Hardy screening might be wasted. However, the weekly pensioners' screening was still busy. Then came the bombshell. Charles Morris takes up the story:

"On the Monday Boris Johnson advised everyone against visiting pubs, theatres etc and audiences sank like a stone from that point. It closed us altogether from the Friday. But we certainly ought to come back from this. [The Rex] has survived two world wars and the flu epidemics of 1918 and 1957. It has a sense of permanence about it, hasn't it?"

Michelle adds: "It's quite soul-destroying. After all these years, [the Rex] is just cold: not even cold as in cold but cold as in lifeless."

Meanwhile, Mildred keeps practising on her home organ ("It's going to get quite a lot of bashing") and the programme ends with the Rex's recorded phone announcement: "Hello, this is the Rex Cinema, Elland. Unfortunately we are closed until further notice from the Government. We wish all our customers the very best and hope to see you again in the near future".

<sup>1</sup> The programme was broadcast on 15 April and may still be available on BBC Sounds. Link: [[www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000gt1q](http://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000gt1q)]. A recording has been placed in the CTA Archive.



Owner Charles Morris sells ice cream during the interval whilst Gary Trinder plays the organ. Photo taken on CTA visit August 2011.



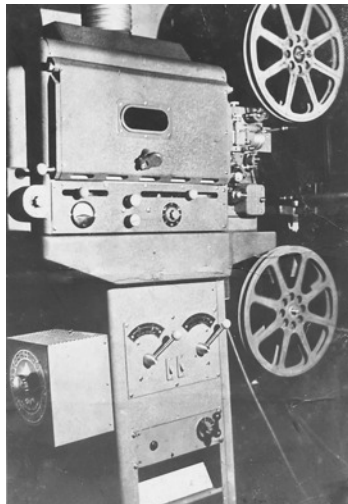
# 16mm IN CINEMAS

By Charles Morris

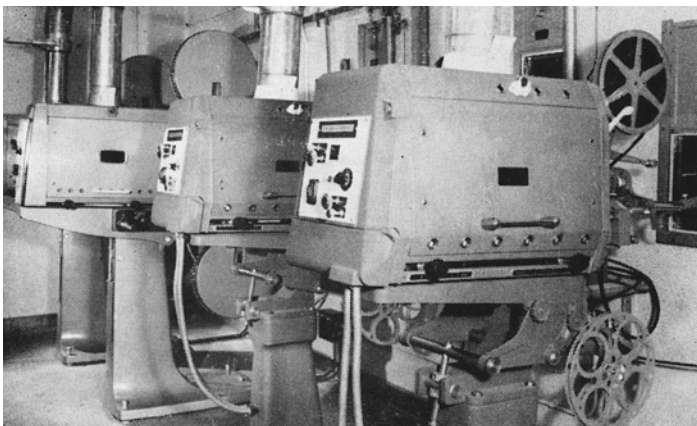
35mm film served as the principal medium for commercial cinemas for well over a century but 16mm also made a significant contribution. The term 'sub-standard' was applied to 16mm as a technical term and not a derogatory one.

A 16mm projector with disc sound was introduced from America in 1931. 16mm had the advantage that it used non-flammable film from the outset and could thus be used without some of the stringent safety requirements that were such a burden to 35mm. Its narrower width apparently overcame an early disadvantage with 35mm safety film in that it did not have the tendency to split down the middle. The disc sound was necessary, however, because early sound on 16mm film gave poor quality. A British sound on film system was developed but it had sound and perforations on opposite sides from the American system, which was later adopted as the standard. It was a relief in 1936 when Western Electric introduced 16mm sound-on-film projectors, which were very dependable, some of them surviving into the 1950s. Initially 16mm was used mainly for promotional and instructional films but the war saw it pressed into service as a means of additionally providing entertainment especially for service personnel in remote locations.

After the war it continued to be used in forces establishments and it also found favour in holiday camps that were springing up at that time, although 35mm was used in many of these scenarios. We were informed in the last edition of *Picture House* that the cinema in the Town Hall, Banchoy, near Aberdeen, actually changed from 35mm to 16mm in 1949! The German-made Bauer projector, with its carbon arclamp was a familiar sight in permanent locations, especially abroad and the Bell & Howell 609 (a pedestal-mounted version of the 601 portable, usually with a Kalee Universal carbon arclamp finished in B&H livery) had wide penetration in

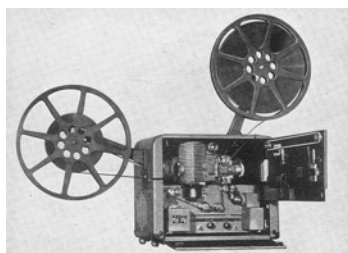


The Bauer 16mm professional

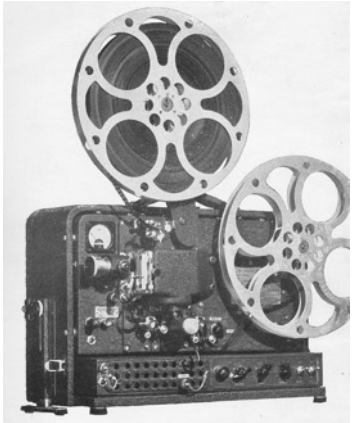
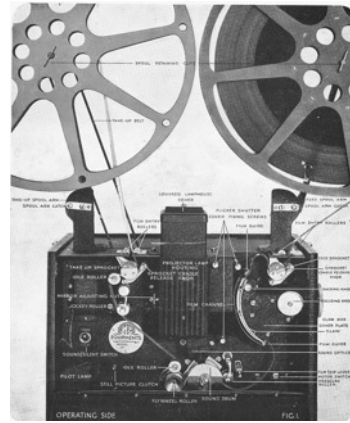


The Bell & Howell 609

Britain; not just in cinemas but in universities, lecture halls and company conference rooms. Later installations sometimes had a xenon lamphouse. The sound was often accompanied by the reproduction of mechanical noise from the projector motor, caused by vibration and the high degree of amplification needed because of the meagre amount of light shining through the soundtrack. In 1950 there were more than 50 static 16mm cinemas listed in the *Kinematograph Year Book*.



The Bell & Howell 601



The GB L516 and the Carpenter

Also in the aftermath of the war a number of surplus 16mm portable projectors came on the market and a few forces personnel who had used these whilst on active or National Service decided to take to the road to offer filmshows in village halls throughout the land. Some of these may have made up the 190 registered mobile operators who in 1950 were offering entertainment films in addition to educational, industrial or advertising shows. Many had two or more units in circulation at once. There were probably several others who just had their own territories and did not advertise their services to anyone else. The GB L516 and the Bell & Howell 601 projectors were ubiquitous and other models mentioned are Ampco, Bolex, BT-H, Carpenter (a left-handed machine), Debie, DeVry and, in quite large numbers, Victor.



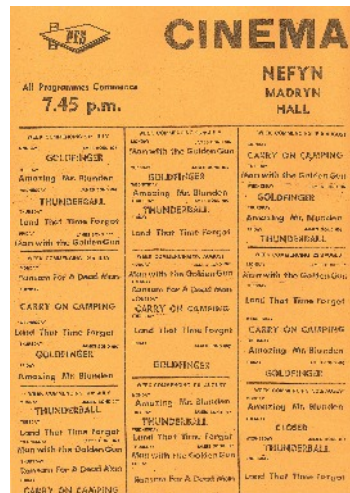
The cinema in Abersoch Village Hall

In the late 1950s David Sutcliffe and his father Edward were still bringing their 'Super 16' shows successfully to Anglesey, Abersoch and other locations in the Llyn

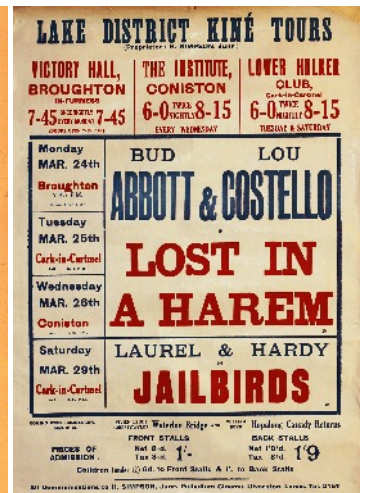


G Bromfield Jones en-route

peninsula during the summer months. Despite the films being usually more than a year old they were accustomed to achieving audiences of 200 (300 in wet weather) but an added attraction was the screening of a local newsreel, filmed by themselves, including events such as the Abersoch regatta and featuring "as many close-ups of local personalities as possible."



Posters for Nefyn Madryn Hall and Lake District Kiné Tours





A Mr G Bromfield Jones did the same with his mobile shows in the Buckinghamshire area.

Treading the North Wales territory even a decade later were John and Dorothy Williamson of Preston Film Services who showed films in Nefyn's *Madryn Hall* from the beginning of July till the end of August, eventually bringing it to an end when in 1976 they took over the full-time *Palace Cinema* at Longridge, Lancs, near to their home. These were the exception, however. Television and the requirement from 1956 for halls to hold a cinematograph licence had seen off the bulk of the itinerant shows several years earlier.

Going back to the 1940s, Councillor Henry Simpson, West Lancs Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association (CEA) Chairman and proprietor of a few cinemas in the Lake District, had also been operating some 16mm shows in village halls in the South Lakes area; namely *Cark*, *Coniston* and *Broughton-in-Furness*. In June 1947, however, he announced that he had ended these, having proved that under conditions then existing they were uneconomic. All sorts of things troubled the 16mm exhibitor, he said; unsatisfactory seating, noisy children and the high rate of Entertainment Tax (this was later abolished for towns with a population of less than 2,000). The younger people were not country yokels; they preferred a night out in town. And he ended with the prescient comment: "The only solution would be to have miniature pre-fab cinemas."



The Unit Four cinema in Brierfield

It took another twenty years but such cinemas did then begin to emerge. Not exactly "pre-fab" cinemas (though some may disagree) but rather the miniature cinemas created by the subdivision of existing ones. The subdivision process began with the *Odeon Nottingham* in 1965 but it was 1969 when Brian Tattersall, a one-time cinema proprietor who had since gone into the cabaret club business, decided to revert his club in Brierfield, near Burnley, to a cinema, naming it and his company *Unit Four*.

It was subsequently claimed that this was the first four-screen cinema to appear but this questionable accolade belongs to the *Cinecenta* cinema in Panton Street, London, which had opened a few months earlier. What Tattersall could legitimately claim, however, was that it was the first four-screen 16mm cinema. Initially each auditorium had fifty seats and was served by two Rank Aldis

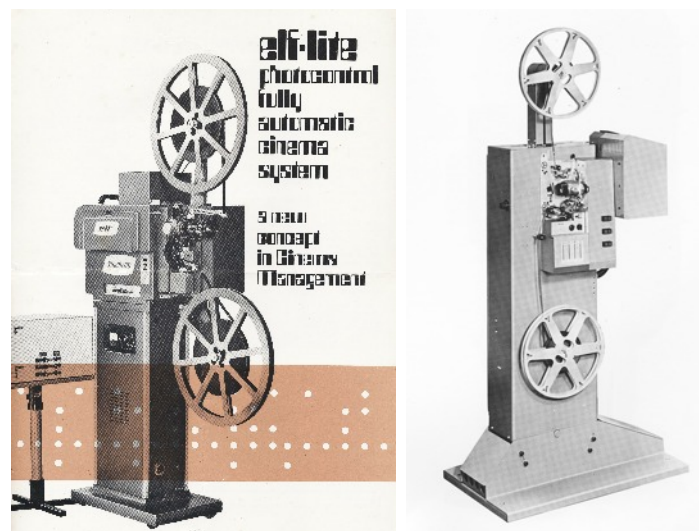


Rank Aldis projector (Bauer P6)

machines (the Bauer P6 portable under the Rank banner) operating changeovers. A single projection room housed the eight projectors (four playing simultaneously) for all four screens with a ninth as a spare.

The venture got off to a slow start; it opened in July 1969 during the second of the Burnley 'wakes weeks' when the entire town shut down and everyone disappeared on holiday and in addition the weather was scorching. Screen ③, showing *The Man From Laramie*, was empty for the first three days. But things soon picked up and just over a year later Tattersall announced the creation of two more four-screen 16mm cinemas: in the former *York* cinema in Hulme, Manchester and at the erstwhile *Star* cinema in Blackburn, Lancs. And the unqualified success of the Brierfield venture had led to his increasing the seating capacity of each screen there from fifty to seventy, with some films playing for four weeks. Although the cinemas lacked screen

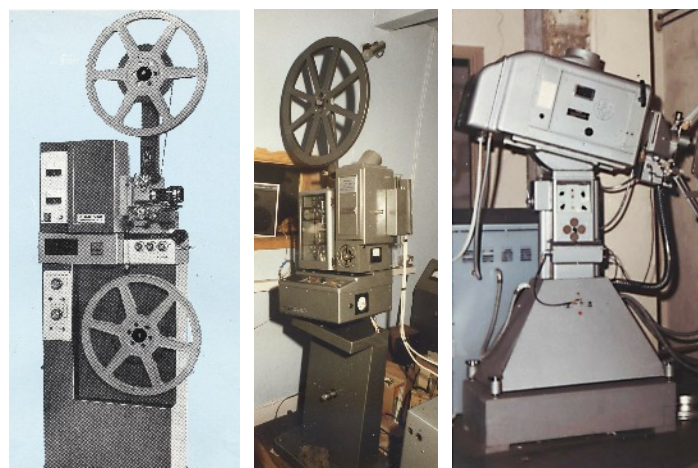
curtains and some other refinements, the seats were very comfortable and licensed bars were introduced into some of the complexes. Screen trailers could not be shown as these had ceased to be produced for nearly all films by the early 1960s but firms like Pearl and Dean obliged with 16mm advert reels.



The Elf-Lite projection system and the Philips FP16

Not surprisingly, other companies began to take an interest. In November 1971, *Classic* cinemas, who by then were operating 16mm in ten situations, arranged a demonstration at the *Classic* cinema, Piccadilly Circus, by Clewer Audio Visual services, makers of the Elf-Lite projection system. The system incorporated a push-button operation with a complete show being set up on one or two projectors and able to present a programme from Sunday to Saturday without any further attention. It could also operate screen masking, houselights, curtains and background music. It is not mentioned whether the Rank or ABC circuits were represented but *Essoldo* were present despite announcing the sale of their circuit to *Classic* just a month later. (And when *Classic* installed a second screen in the ex-*Essoldo* Huddersfield, they equipped it with an Italian-made *Fumeo* 16mm projector rather than an Elf.)

Early in 1972 David Williams, an ex-field representative with the Rank Organisation, opened the *Cineplex*, a three-screen operation underneath the Grosvenor House hotel in Charter Square, Sheffield, in a space originally intended for three shops. Projection was by three Philips FP16 16mm pedestal projectors. The trade press took and continued to take great interest in the progress of this enterprise.



The Fumeo Xenon 900, a Hortson [LH] and the Debie 16mm

Next to join in the fray was Harold Baim, the short films producer, who announced the reopening in March 1972 of the *Studio* cinema, Fishguard, South Wales, with the 16mm *Fumeo Xenon 900* projector providing a 35 ft wide picture to a potential audience of 252. "I would never have gone into this unless the standard of projection was equal to 35mm," said Mr Baim; "People expect the best today..." John King of Brighton, the British agent for *Fumeo*, revealed that the xenon projector was also installed at the cinema in Amlwch, Anglesey, *Theatre One*, Coventry, the *Classic Theatre Club*, Southampton and various regional film theatres; with other installations scheduled for unspecified venues in Northwich, Nottingham, Scunthorpe and Luton.



Amongst other converts was the Hutchinson Leisure Group, a small circuit operating mainly in North Wales and Lancashire, who tripled the Regent, Fleetwood and installed the Fumeo 16mm projectors in the two smaller screens.

The design and variety of 16mm professional projectors were coming on apace and even the portable models were being rapidly improved. Machines such as the Bell & Howell 666, with its Marc 300 lamp, could hold its own against several of the pedestal models even on screens exceeding 25 ft in width. But just seven months after their demonstration in London, Classic cinemas were beginning to make discouraging noises about print quality. "Two thousand [!] 16mm cinemas in Czechoslovakia can't be all wrong; thirty five in England must be wrong." With this remark Reg Dowdeswell, joint managing director, told the CEA annual meeting that unless there was a constant standard of high-quality prints it was not possible to run commercial 16mm cinemas. "We have ten. The chances are that next year we won't have one."

Other operators leapt to the defence of 16mm. "We have now used it commercially for three years and have sixteen cinemas. The chances are that next year we will have thirty two," said Brian Tattersall of Unit Four. "I would have agreed with his remarks two years ago. Since then I have campaigned strongly with all renters for better quality prints and have been extremely pleased with the constant progress... I can only assume they [Classic] accept whatever they get and then complain when it is too late..." Chris Brown, who had created twin-screen cinemas in the circle of the Vale, Mirfield, near Huddersfield, using Hortson 16mm projectors, also commented "...the quality of prints available only three months ago was dreadful but in such a short time the major renters have already reorganised their film libraries to include a full 16mm commercial section and those prints we now receive are mostly in far better condition than their 35mm counterparts..." And David Williams at the Cineplex Sheffield added "I feel rather worried that people who should really know better are not prepared to fight a bit and get a better standard. If they didn't accept bad prints and refused to play them, the situation would soon change."

Tattersall went on to create more 16mm complexes at Walkden, near Salford and Pemberton, near Wigan, bringing his total to five locations. At Brierfield he had moved on from his Rank Aldis projectors in favour of Eiki 1500s, which were also installed at Blackburn but later put up for grabs at £1,250 a pair and succeeded by unspecified models. Harold Baim, meanwhile, opened his second cinema towards the end of 1972 at Coleford, near Gloucester but using 35mm. He justified his decision thus: "The reason we are using 35mm is because we are following Gloucester. At Fishguard – and another 16mm we are planning in Norfolk – we have no opposition. We don't have to follow anybody fast. There is a hiatus between [a film's] release and a 16mm print becoming available... We want Coleford to follow Gloucester quickly and we can only do it in 35mm." However he returned to the fold very quickly and in less than six months had pulled out his 35mm equipment and installed a Fumeo 16mm projector, for reasons which are difficult to understand except for his statement "We could see no reason for sustaining the heavy cost of 35mm. Transport of films alone costs £6 or £7 a week."

At the same time Reg Dowdeswell at Classic was still battling away. "There should be 16mm cinemas for areas that cannot afford the costs of building a 35mm cinema. The medium is right. The machinery is there. Small cinemas can be built to accommodate it. But the renters won't spend the money to produce film prints of a commercial calibre. We get the copies after the prisons, the film societies, the ships and everybody else has played them. There should be no difference between the quality of an 8ft wide picture on 16mm and a 16ft wide picture on 35mm. But there is. And when you twin or triple a cinema and put 16mm into the smallest, the comparison is odious." It all depended on where you were sitting and your viewing angle to the screen, of course but it should have been possible to make better prints than was often the case, provided the skill was available and the spirit was willing. And it was not unreasonable that patrons of a multi-screen cinema should expect identical quality in each screen, especially if paying the same price. Ken Troy of Film Distributors Associated, formed in 1968 to handle the 16mm films of United Artists and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, offered a few comments. "While we may be waiting for the negative to come from New York, there is also the question that having got a new print it can't be used by a particular hall because of a barring clause. In this event we can't hold the print

back, we have got to get a return on it immediately. The shipping world provides a very valuable source of revenue. The films play outside territorial waters so they can have them as early as they like. But prisons, hospitals, hotels, holiday camps, youth clubs, schools and the like have to wait nine months after release. There have been very successful screenings of 16mm films in commercial cinemas but the continuity of good prints is difficult. Not all the films on 35mm are available on 16mm... it seems likely that a major reason is because there is not the same financial return. The revenue from 16mm cinemas has not reached the stage where it warrants us putting on a new print for every film. It is only a small proportion of the overall revenue of the 35mm film. But what is being realised, though not quickly enough, is that with the closure of many [35mm] cinemas 16mm revenue is becoming more important."

But quality and availability did not improve quickly or significantly enough and the 16mm exhibitors began drifting towards 35mm. There also were more fundamental drawbacks with some prints. A copy of Clint Eastwood's *Magnum Force* arrived at the Regent, Fleetwood, in black-and-white instead of colour and another film which should have been in CinemaScope came as a 'letterbox' print, which could be shown with a standard lens but was minus some picture area at each side. Added to that, the opening credits occupied the full frame, squeezed, with the letterbox image being substituted following them. All these things contributed



Brian Tattersall in Brierfield 1979  
(35mm)

to a very unprofessional image and it wasn't long before the 16mm projectors were replaced by Westar 35mm machines. Brian Tattersall announced in June 1973 that he was converting two screens in each Unit Four complex to 35mm. "I have no complaint about the quality of 16mm prints nor picture quality. But there are problems with obtaining all the titles we want in 16mm." He further said that when the major circuits did not go ahead with 16mm mini cinemas, renters did not make 16mm prints readily available. (It was certainly noticeable that the Rank and ABC circuits and Star, had been very silent during the whole proceedings.) The Unit Four cinemas had all been converted to 35mm by the middle of 1974. At the same time David Williams in Sheffield announced that he was replacing the 16mm projector in his largest screen with 35mm. "In the City centre I can't wait for prints. And when I get them some of the workmanship is very sloppy." Recently he had had a new print direct from America. "The last reel was completely out of sync. The British distributor was very good and rushed me up another copy but by the time I got it, two days had been lost." The Vale at Mirfield converted its two screens to 35mm Simplex second-hand projectors with long-running attachments and the Classic Huddersfield took out its Fumeo in Screen 2 and replaced it with a Kalee 21. Only Harold Baim remained loyal – for a while. "We are happy. We get prints before they are put into the libraries. As soon as they come off the boats the distributors ring us and give us priority."

The CTA's 1980 *Directory of Cinemas* lists approximately seventy venues in Britain with 16mm projectors, nearly all of them in addition to 35mm and the majority either British Film Institute Regional Film Theatres (with Fumeo projectors in the main, though some Philips) or in Local Authority ownership. Harold Baim's cinemas had been re-equipped with 35mm and had gone to other proprietors. The original Unit Four cinemas had had Cinemeccanica 35mm machines fitted. In London about half a dozen were still shown as having 16mm as well as 35mm including The Gate 1 cinema (the former Classic Notting Hill Gate, one of the original repertory cinemas) and, more surprisingly, the Classic Oxford Street in its fifth screen and, even more surprisingly, the Odeon Marble Arch, with a Hortson projector in one of its smaller screens. The Cineplex Sheffield carried on with two 16mm screens and one 35mm until 1982 when David Williams retired. The Council then bought the remainder of the lease and made it into the Sheffield Film Theatre.

Film theatres, film societies etc. were really the natural habitat for 16mm as it provided the facility for showing films made on 16mm and for which the cost of a limited number of 35mm prints was not justified. And travelling shows, where still needed, plus 'shut-in locations' (ships, schools, prisons etc; the places Mr Dowdeswell was complaining about) were the other logical applications as 35mm, both films and equipment, were generally too expensive, heavy and cum-



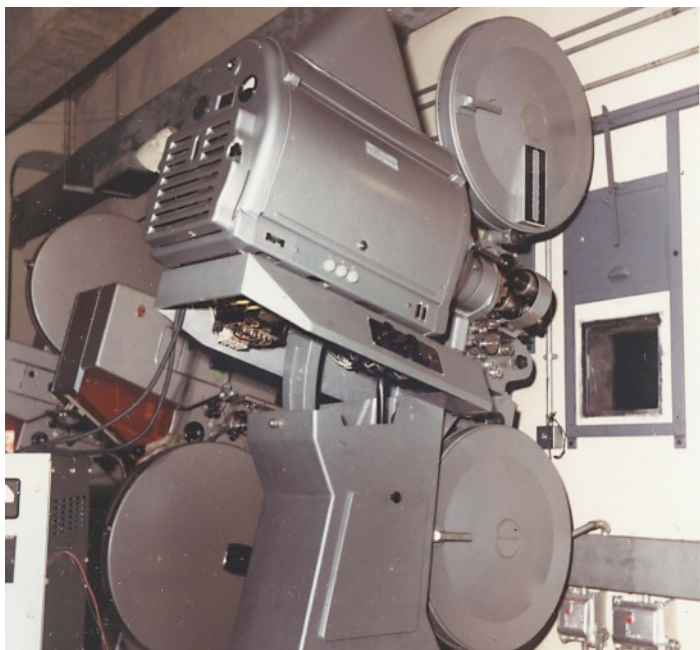
bersome. Wider adoption of 16mm by the major cinema circuits could have facilitated the subsequent availability of prints to 16mm permanent cinemas in remote places but the circuits could have legitimately argued that it would thus have been to their detriment. And the showing of mainstream films on 16mm in complexes already equipped with 35mm had few if any advantages. The price of new equipment might have been cheaper but space was seldom an issue. Brian Tattersall was perfectly able to accommodate 35mm projectors in his cinemas when the time came and his staffing costs were probably no different. And despite Harold Baim's claim that the standard of 16mm was equal to 35mm, this simply was not true; it could not be true – the 16mm frame is less than a quarter of the area of 35mm so blowing it up to fill the same size of screen is naturally going to magnify the imperfections. Reg Dowdeswell's observation that "the comparison [with 35mm] is odious" was nearer to the mark, even if the bulk of the population didn't notice. 16mm could be good or even very good but it was never going to be as good as 35mm.

The 16mm film libraries carried on handling new releases well into the 1990s, however, supplying the film societies, 'shut-in locations' and anyone else who wished to hire them. But video, followed by DVD, were on their way and once projectors were made which could produce a bright enough picture on a big screen, 16mm was doomed. It is interesting to note, however, that some films were released on 16mm and kept away from video for a while in order to inhibit piracy.

The advent of digital has brought the tale full circle. Films are once again being shown in village halls, pubs, clubs and hotels with superb quality in a lot of cases. But it brings a sigh to those of us who have broken our backs carrying heavy equipment around and cut grooves in our fingers rewinding and checking films. And when we think of what we paid years ago for equipment, which now is not worth a bean...

My own story doesn't quite end here. When I took over the Picturehouse, Keighley, in 1996 I inherited a Hortson 16mm projector which was installed alongside the 35mm machine in Screen ②. I used it a few times at children's matinées, to show certain Disney films that were available on 16mm but no longer on 35mm; one of those little quirks that occurred sometimes in this idiosyncratic business. I still occasionally use 16mm at several of my cinemas to show old newsreels and other novelties to accompany the classic films, which I present sometimes. I was very thankful for 16mm one day in July 2011 at my Ulverston Roxy cinema where I was to show *Genevieve* for a one-day presentation. I had hired a 35mm print from the British Film Institute (we had not converted to digital at that time), only to find it had a 'magenta' soundtrack, which was incompatible with the 'red light readers' with which we had had to adapt our soundheads for the cyan soundtracks then being produced. The resulting sound was all but inaudible but I was able to borrow a 16mm print from a friend, which saved the day.

I have no doubt that other readers will have more and greater knowledge of running 16mm professionally and it would be interesting to hear from them.



A Zeiss Icon 16mm

## THE WEEK THAT KILLED CINEMAS

By Allen Eyles

According to an online article for the new *Weekly Film Bulletin* from *Sight & Sound* by Charles Gant, "The Week That Killed Cinema-Going", dated 3 April 2020: The UK/Ireland box office 2020 vs 2019 showed a 19% increase in January, a 21% increase in February and a 50% decrease in March. The number of UK and Ireland cinemas reporting box office takings declined after Friday 13 March's total of 839 to 826 on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup>, 805 on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup>, 747 on Monday 16<sup>th</sup>, then dramatically down to 537 on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> and even more dramatically down to 169 on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup>, 108 on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>, a mere 20 on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> and then to just one (where it is not mentioned) on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup>. At the same time Curzon Home Cinema box office for 20-22 March claimed to be 155% up on the previous weekend and 347% up from 2019 and 89% up on the previous best weekend.

Here is one example of how quickly shutdown took place. On Tuesday 17 March at 2:10 pm, the independent Orion Cinema at Burgess Hill, West Sussex, issued this statement: During the Covid-19 outbreak, we are taking all the precautions recommended to our industry and where possible exceeding these. We will continue to take on board guidelines as they are updated and we will update our own procedures accordingly. The protection of customers and staff is of paramount importance to us and we have introduced a strict cleaning plan to ensure that all surfaces, handles and handrails are cleaned at regular intervals. Additionally, we have reduced the number of tickets that we will sell in each Screen to 50% of capacity, ensuring that you will have the opportunity to keep some separation between you and other customers. In line with Government guidance we are currently operating as usual but we'll continue to monitor developments closely.



The Orion Burgess Hill; photo taken April 2008

Then, a little over a day later, at 5:07 pm, the Orion issued the following: Announcement to Customers: Along with all other cinemas and theatre operators, we are taking all the precautions recommended to our industry. Recent Government advice to the public to avoid theatres has resulted in many closures in the cinema and theatre industry. In line with this, we at The Orion have decided to close temporarily in the interests of both Customers and Staff with immediate effect. We will look to re-open as soon as possible, taking into account Government advice. Please check with our website where we will post further news as the current situation develops: [www.orioncinema.com]. For those with bookings for *Michael Ball & Alfie Boe: Back Together*, the distributor has taken the decision to postpone these performances to 12 & 13 September. Your current tickets will be valid for these September performances; however, we will be in touch with you in the coming days. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and understanding during these difficult times and look forward to welcoming you back to the Orion soon. The Orion Team

For the record, the Cinema Advertising Association records that cinema admissions totalled 16,505,362 in January and 14,544,878 in February. There were 840 cinema sites in 2019 with 4,564 screens and 937,161 seats.



# OXFORD'S CITY CENTRE OF DREAMS

## By Mike Whitcombe

The poet Matthew Arnold famously wrote in his poem *Thyrsis* that Oxford was the "City of dreaming spires". Few people would disagree with these words, even though they were written in December 1865. Home to the oldest university in the English-speaking world, Oxford is a romantic seat of learning that boasts every style of English architecture from the late Anglo-Saxon period onwards. The University, which comprises 38 colleges and six permanent halls, was established as long ago as the twelfth Century with the names of Balliol and Merton far more prestigious than latter day upstarts such as Harvard or Stanford. Even if you've never visited Oxford, many of its landmarks are instantly recognisable, largely due to the long-running television productions of *Morse* and *Lewis*. By using City locations so effectively, these perfectly executed dramas made local landmarks like the Bridge of Sighs, the Ashmolean Museum or the Bodleian Library as familiar to a cowboy from Texas as they are to an Oxford Don scurrying between tutorials.

Almost all of these much photographed landmarks surround or lay inside a compact City centre that also boasts leading fashion stores, quirky independent shops and countless eateries. There really is something for everyone in Oxford City centre and that also includes cinema enthusiasts. Sixty years ago most High Streets had at least a couple of cinemas within walking distance of each other. Nowadays that's rarely so. But Oxford City centre is an exception. It boasts three – yes, three – cinemas, all within a five-minute walk of each other. Two are traditional High Street cinemas that have served locals for generations. The third is less than three years old and is sleek, modern and a bold attempt to prove a contemporary design can comfortably sit alongside medieval or Georgian architecture.

The oldest – and some might say the most impressive – of this trio is the current Odeon in Magdalen Street, where the original auditorium is still in one piece, having barely been altered in ninety-six years. It opened under the name the *Oxford Super* and was built and initially operated by The Oxford Cinematograph Theatre Company (the architect was JC Leed with construction carried out by the Frank Matcham Company) with a total seating capacity of 1,300 (950 in the stalls and 350 in the circle). The narrow, three storey frontage of the building didn't suggest a grand cinema – it still doesn't almost a Century later – and certainly didn't reveal that the building also contained a 'high class café'. Interior decoration was in a French Renaissance style while on the side walls of the auditorium were two large paintings by the artist George Robert Rushton (1869-1948). One depicted 'Modern Sport', the other 'Early Morning'. Opening night was 1 January 1924 with a screening of the anti-war movie *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* starring screen lover Rudolph Valentino, which had first been released in March 1921.

On 6 January 1930 the *Oxford Super* became the first cinema in Oxford to screen talking pictures. The film chosen for this historic occasion was MGM's *Broadway Melody*, starring Charles King, Anita Page and Bessie Love. Described as a "pulsating drama of Broadway's bared heart" which "speaks and sings with a voice to stir your soul!" it centres around chorus girls trying to make it big on Broadway. The screen's very first musical, it's described by Halliwell as "exceedingly primitive by the standards of even a year later but rather endearing and with a splendid score."

In June 1931 the cinema was taken over by Union, who renamed it the *Super*. In the mid-1930s Union had the proscenium rebuilt and the stage extended over the now defunct orchestra pit. But Union's ownership was short-lived. In October 1937 the financially stricken Union was taken over by John Maxwell's ABC, who out-muscled the



The interior of the Odeon Magdalen Street

American Paramount company to add 136 Union sites to their ever-growing portfolio. The *Super* constantly proved a profit-making site for ABC and in July 1971 it was given the 'luxury lounge' treatment. Closed for just fourteen days, it reopened on 25 July with 853 seats in the stalls area only. It was renamed *ABC Magdalen Street* at this time although in later years after various corporate buy-outs it was known as *Cannon*, *MGM* and then *ABC* again. In 2000 Odeon took control and renamed it the *Odeon Magdalen Street*.

Odeon has invested serious money since taking over. An *Oxford Mail* article in 2012 claimed £1 million had been spent. Converting the former café on the first floor into a 55-seat screen, resulting in the flat at the front of the building now being inaccessible, reseating the site in 2010 and placing a Costa's Coffee Shop at the front of the long, narrow entrance foyer would certainly account for such expenditure. The original screen currently seats 617, with 104 *Super* Luxury seats and 43 *Luxury* seats in the circle and 470 standard seats in the stalls. Despite the fact that drapes covering the side walls continue to hide the Rushton paintings, it's an impressive auditorium. Now Grade II listed, it's a stunning survivor of a real movie palace.

During the 1920s and 1930s the economy and society of Oxford underwent a huge transformation. Women, first admitted to the University in 1878 when they could only attend, were finally allowed to receive degrees and the boundaries of the City were extended to include Headington, Cowley, Iffley and Wolvercote. William Morris expanded his Morris Motors car plant in Cowley, which had been established in 1919, resulting in thousands of jobs and a population increase. Against this backdrop it was no surprise that a modern cinema should open and in April 1936 it did in the shape of the *Ritz*, which is still showing films today under the banner of Odeon.



The Odeon Magdalen Street



The Odeon George Street

It was opened by Union and was built on the site of the Chapel of St George-the-Martyr, which was consecrated in 1850 and on census day in 1851 claimed to have a congregation of 125 in the morning and 175 in the evening. It served the poorer population of the district but closed around the time of the Great War. Between 1921-35 the chapel was used by the Ministry of Labour as a Labour Exchange. Other sources, however, claim that a Cinematograph Theatre stood on the site during this period but this can be dismissed by an article in the *Oxford Times*, dated 1 June 1934, which reports that: "A new cinema is to be built on the site of the Employment Exchange in George Street by Union Cinemas Limited. The new cinema will have a frontage of 140 feet to George Street."



The architect was Robert Cromie. He designed a solid looking brick-faced building that was dominated by a large centre window over the entrance doors, above which was a carved figure in bas-relief by designer Newbury Trent (1885-1953). There was a similar figure in the auditorium, which had a capacity of 1,654 spread between stalls and circle. The cinema also contained a café and a Compton 3 Manual / 6 Rank organ with Melotone attachment.

Opening night was 20 April 1936 with a British comedy called *The Guv'nor* (released in America as *Mr Hobo*) starring George Arliss. Within a year the Ritz was an ABC, following their acquisition of Union. The modern Ritz was one of the jewels in Union's crown and it was a welcome addition to an ever-growing ABC circuit. In 1959 the cinema was equipped to screen 70mm Todd-AO films on a fifty by twenty foot screen. The first 70mm film was screened on 22 February with a showing of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific*.

In March 1963 the Ritz was renamed ABC. On 12 March the auditorium was badly damaged by fire, which caused the building to be closed until October for refurbishment. The architects employed were Don Berry and Jack Sutton, who produced a design with plainer decoration and drapes covering the auditorium walls. Four years later on 15 October 1967 the ABC hosted the world première of *Dr Faustus*. It was directed by Richard Burton along with Nevill Coghill (it was the only film either man helmed) and starred the brilliant Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. Both Burton and Taylor, the most glamorous couple Hollywood has ever produced, attended the première.

In September 1975 the ABC was closed once again, this time for tripling. Screen ① (in the former circle) opened on 16 November with a total of 612 seats. The two mini screens, placed at the rear of the stalls, opened a month later on 14 December with 210 and 141 seats respectively. In the next couple of decades the usual name changes occurred as the ABC became Cannon, MGM and then ABC again before Odeon took control twenty years ago.

The Odeon now has six screens. Three are upstairs. Screen ① (185 seats) and Screen ② (187 seats) are in the former circle, which has been split down the middle. Screen ③ is in the former first floor café and has a capacity of 84. The remaining three screens are in the former stalls; two are in the rear stalls with the other occupying the front stalls. Screen ④ holds 109 seats, Screen ⑤ seats 187 and Screen ⑥ has seating for 108 patrons.

It's ironical that Oxford now has two Odeons because it was a City that Oscar Deutsch, during the 1930s, that golden age of cinema building, never built or opened an Odeon. Plans were drawn up, though. On page 203 of Allen Eyles' outstanding first volume of the Odeon circuit, he reveals that architect Harry Weedon drew up plans for an Odeon in St Aldates. A drawing shows a curious mixture of art deco sleekness and medieval touches, including a tower, which was similar to the 12<sup>th</sup> Century bell tower in central Oxford, known as Carfax Tower. Arches at each end of the building gave access to a rear car park. The outbreak of war meant the idea went no further.

The third City centre cinema is the five-screen Curzon, situated on two levels in the 750,000 square foot Westgate Centre – so named as it was the location for the original West Gate in the City wall – a £440 million retail, eating and leisure centre that opened in October 2017. The cinema was meant to open on 17 November 2017 but a delay in fitting the cinema out meant opening night was two weeks later on 1 December.

It's a sleek, modern cinema, the entrance foyer resembling a trendy wine bar rather than a town centre cinema. In fact, only the movie posters suggest there's a cinema lurking inside. A well-stocked bar and 6,000 square foot reception area with plenty of seats and tables to enjoy a tipple or a meal greet you and prove the advertising hype that claims the Curzon has a cafe-bar, a pizzeria and grill, a night time bar and a members lounge is correct. As a company, Curzon believes food and drink is an important part of a visit but we're not talking the usual coke and popcorn. The Curzon menu boasts goat's cheese pizza, beetroot and goat's cheese salad, guacamole and tortilla chips, smoothies, milkshakes, cocktails and even champagne at £65 a bottle. It's cinema food but not as most of us know it.

All five screens are on a lower floor and contain luxury seating. The largest is Screen ② with 172 seats. Screen ① holds 144 seats and Screen ③ boasts 134. Both Screens ④ and ⑤ seat 82 patrons each. A 35 mm projector is still in use on occasion although digital projection is obviously the norm. It's a welcome and popular addition to the city centre but not all publicity has been good.



Three views of the Curzon in the Westgate Centre, Oxford

The *Oxford Mail* reported on 15 October 2019 that 65-year-old Stuart Jarvis, a former manager of the Phoenix Picturehouse – and a guy you would think knew a thing or two about cinemas – was refused entry unless he handed over a bag containing a birthday cake and loaf of bread he had bought for his wife. Curzon, like most cinema chains do not allow patrons to take their own food into the cinema but normally it's food you would eat during the film and not everyday shopping. Jarvis claimed four staff surrounded him in an abrupt and confrontational manner and began shouting at him. He rightly asked for a refund and was given one.

Oxford is now considered one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the country. It's a fact that's helped by the ten million tourists who annually visit the City to shop, photograph world famous colleges and gaze at impressive medieval architecture. But with thirteen screens across three cinemas all within walking distance, for many of us Oxford City centre is a movie-going paradise where we are spoilt for choice even on a cold, wet midweek afternoon.

Photos by the author, except RH interior of proscenium at the Odeon Magdalen Street by Harry Rigby on CTA visit in April 2009



# CINEMAS AND THEATRES OF TOWER HAMLETS

## An update by Gavin McGrath

Unbelievably it's been ten years since the original book hit the shelves and like anywhere else there has been a fair amount of activity. Here is an update featuring new venues since the book was published and further information on previously-mentioned cinemas and theatres.

### NEW CINEMAS AND THEATRES



The Curzon in Calder Way, just a stone's throw from Aldgate, opened on 20 January 2017 with 275 reclining seats across four screens. Screen ② is the largest with 78 seats and Screen ③ has 3D capability. The opening films were *Jackie*, *La La Land*, *Manchester by the Sea* and *Goodfellas*. The cinema has a Kids' Club showing family films every Saturday and also a Baby Club. A virtual tour of the cinema, which forms part of a new housing development, can be taken on the website.



The Everyman is situated on Level 2 of Crossrail Place and seats 266 across three screens, Screen ① is the largest with 109 seats. The cinema is fitted with Sony 4k digital projectors and Dolby integrated sound with premier armchair and sofa seating in all screens. On opening it was the Everyman's fifth site in the Capital and just a few minutes' walk from the Cineworld. The opening film was *Pitch Perfect 2* on the morning of 15 January 2015 with *Mad Max: Fury Road* shown in the evening. The large bar area serves cocktails, snacks, popcorn and retro candy. The cinema launched three years ahead of the proposed opening date of the Crossrail station, which is already two years behind. Crossrail Place itself is a retail and leisure destination between Canary Wharf and the Billingsgate Fish Market.

The Yard Theatre, at Queen's Yard in White Post Lane, is situated in a converted warehouse and was built using recycled material. It was conceived by Jay Miller and designed by Practice Architects in collaboration with Christopher Daniel. The floor is concrete and seating is provided on a tiered set-up to accommodate 130 people. The fare is a mixture of film and theatre with the annual NOW Festival presenting a collection of performances each April with a different one twice nightly. In 2014 examples were *The Tom Hanks Missions*, *Life on the Refrigerator Door*, *Guinea Pigs on Trial* and *The Way I Wear My Hair*. In 2015 open submissions and invited productions were staged with a double bill to be had for just £10 each night, with plays by new writers at £3 per show. John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* by



Beggarsbelieve Theatre Company was staged here in 2012. Examples of films screened include *Boogie Nights*, *Ed Wood* and *Tootsie* in the spring of 2013 with tickets at £7. Rooftop Film Club has also used the venue, typically in 2012 when *Cocktail*, *Purple Rain*, *Trainspotting*, *Back to the Future*, *Stand by Me*, *Psycho* and *Rocky* were screened with tickets at £9 each. The Short Sighted Cinema held a day short films in June 2017.

### UPDATES

The Aubin in Club Row was renamed the Electric in 2014 and was part of the Soho House group. It closed in June 2019 and became a members-only cinema last autumn. The Genesis has since converted two of its screens to a luxury experience and they are now known as Studios ④ and ⑤.

### PROPOSED CINEMAS



Planning permission was granted in 2017 for a £45million redevelopment of the Rex site in Bethnal Green Road, to include hotel, cinema and rooftop bar. The project was intended to be delivered by January 2020 but was later side-lined. As of March 2019 a new developer, Accor, is planning a new venture likely to be the first Jo&Joe to be opened in the UK. The building has been boarded up since the departure of Frankle Trimmings. Originally Smart's Picture Palace, the cinema was reconstructed as the Rex in 1938 and closed in 1964.

All photographs courtesy of Gavin McGrath, apart from the artist's impression of the Rex, which is kindly provided by Ozseeker. If you would like a list of other venues in the Borough that have screened films please email [cinema\_business@aol.co.uk].

The original book *Cinemas and Theatres of Tower Hamlets* is still available from me but there are only a few left so you will have to be quick. If anyone would like to buy a copy please send a cheque for £4.90 (£3.50 plus £1.40 p&p) to Flat E, 4 Meadow Close, London, E9 5NZ. Alternatively they can be obtained from the CTA. It turns out that although East Ferry Road is two words Westferry is just one. Bear this in mind when you read the book!



# 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: [\[cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn\]](http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn)

**Please note that most of these Newsreel items are dated before the current situation developed. Many building projects are on hold and cinemas are closed.**

## ABERDEEN

Cineworld has been granted permission for an extension at its Queen's Link site. It will include a 409-seat IMAX auditorium and a further additional screen. When complete, the cinema will have 2,500 seats, including ten standard screens to complement the IMAX. 90 parking spaces will be lost. {26961}

*Evening Express, Aberdeen – 4 March; Banffshire Advertiser – 10 March*

## ASHFORD (Kent)

Work has started on an upgrade to the twelve-screen Cineworld at Eureka Leisure Park. An extension will be built containing an IMAX screen and a 4DX screen. Permission had originally been granted for an additional three screens but this was lowered to two in 2018. The work is expected to be complete next March. {24116}

*Kent Online – 30 March; sent in by Ray Dolling, Philip Stevens & Martin Tapsell*

## BARRY (Vale of Glamorgan)



The Wetherspoons pub The Sir Samuel Romilly, housed in the former Romilly cinema, had a £700,000 refurbishment last year. However, the Council has asked them to rip up the new carpet, as it featured the town's Coat of Arms, which was used without permission. {21286}

*Wales Online – 23 July; sent in by Gavin McGrath; photo taken August 2007*

## BATH



Plans have been unveiled for housing an upgraded shop on the site of the former Scala at Oldfield Park. Films ceased around 1961 and it became a Co-op supermarket in 1962. The 1960s extension will be demolished but the historic façade will be retained. A new extension will be built to house the store and 96 student rooms. {28722}

*Midsomer Norton, Radstock & District Journal – 20 February; photo taken March 2006*

## BEESTON (Notts)

The steelwork has gone up for the new eight-screen Arc cinema at the Beeston Square development. It is running four to five weeks behind schedule but opening was expected in time for Christmas.

*Nottingham Post – 8, 21 February, 11 March*

## BELFAST

The fourteen-screen Movie House in the Yorkgate Centre is being upgraded. A 'Changing Places' accessible toilet has been installed. An audio description system is being added to three screens. {26685}

*North Belfast News – 15 February*

Movie House has confirmed that their ten-screen Dublin Road cinema will closed on 26 April. It will be converted into the HQ for an IT company. {26684}

*Sunday Life, Belfast – 23 February*

## BOURNEMOUTH

A second attempt to secure planning permission to convert the former Grand in Westbourne into a gym has failed. Planners said installing a mezzanine in the auditorium was unacceptable. See p16 last Bulletin. {22430}

*Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 29 February*

## BRADFORD

Last year, the Council refused an application for a large LED advertising board on the side of the Grade II listed Dudley Hill Picture Palace. Applicants Clear Channel appealed the refusal but the government inspector upheld the decision. The cinema opened in December 1912 and closed in 1967. The building is currently used as a carpet shop. {36724}

*Telegraph & Argus, Bradford; Yorkshire Post – 20 February; photo on front cover*

## BRENTWOOD (Essex)

Brentwood Community Theatre started showing films in February. Performances are on Monday evenings and Sunday afternoons. [\[brentwood-theatre.co.uk\]](http://brentwood-theatre.co.uk)

*Essex Chronicle – 6 February*

## BRIDGWATER (Somerset)

Funding to regenerate the Northgate site is due to be signed off. It will include a seven-screen cinema, run by Scott Cinemas. The Council, which owns the site, will be fully funding the scheme. Construction was due to begin this summer with the opening a year later.

*Bridgwater Mercury – 25 February*

## BRIERLEY HILL (Dudley)



The former Danilo has been put on the market for £295,000. It was opened by George Formby in December 1936 and had 1,200 seats. Films ceased in February 1969 in favour of bingo. In 2000 it became a nightclub, which closed in 2014. The building has been empty since. See p21 Bulletin 53/3. {37851}

*Express & Star – 30 March; photo taken May 2006*





## BROMSGROVE (Worcs)

The Artrix Arts Centre has ceased trading after being forced to close because of the Covid-19 pandemic. It opened in April 2005. It is hoped it could reopen when the situation improves. [www.artrix.co.uk] {26496}

*The Stage* – 7 April; sent in by John West; photo on front cover

## BUILTH WELLS (Powys)

A new organisation trying to set up a Sunday cinema club has applied to the Town Council for a grant of £808.40 to help them set up the project. They have also raised £1,020 by fundraising themselves. The group is planning to use the Wyeside Arts Centre for the screenings.

*Mid Wales Journal* – 6 March

## BURY ST EDMUNDS (Suffolk)



The current eight-screen Cineworld is to expand by two screens. The new screens would be in the existing foyer and a new entrance lobby created by building an extension across the pedestrianised entrance alley. This would bring the cinema's frontage in line with the street. The total number of seats will decrease from 1,632 to 1,424. {24293}

*Bury Free Press* – 14 February; *East Anglian Daily Times* – 7 April; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken July 2007

## CARDIFF



Permission has been granted to demolish the former Gaiety and build 114 student flats, to be called Gaiety House. The cinema opened in 1912 and closed in 1961. Bingo took over until 1998 and the building has been empty and a target for squatters.

*BBC News website* – 27 February

## COLCHESTER (Essex)

Light Cinemas is to be the operator of a new cinema to be built at Tollgate Village. It is expected to be open by the end of 2021. The report did not mention the proposed number of screens.

*Essex County Standard, Daily Gazette* – 10 March

A petition has been started to save the former Odeon in Crouch Street. The building has been empty since the cinema closed more than 18 years ago. Existing owner Blumarble has twice been ordered to tidy up the derelict premises by Colchester Council, which has issued it with Section 215 orders, the latest of which expired on 24 April. A Facebook page has been set up to share snippets showing the iconic building's colourful history. Visit [bit.ly/3bjke1n] or sign the petition at [bit.ly/3ba0fU]. {17575}

*Essex County Standard* – 16 April; sent in by Terry Hanstock

## CORK (Ireland)

Plans have been submitted to demolish the former Coliseum and build a 171-bed four-star hotel. The cinema opened in September 1913 and closed in April 1964. It was remodelled as a Leisureplex consisting of a bowling alley, zoo and laser centre. Work has already begun on demolishing the five-screen former Cinema World in Douglas, which only opened in 1998; it will be replaced by an Aldi store. {28855} {31090}

*Irish Examiner* – 12 March

## COVENTRY



Plans have been revealed to convert the former ABC in Hertford Street into a music venue. It opened in May 1973, a replacement for the former Empire on the same site. It had 840 seats in stadium-style and 70mm projection. It became the Cannon in 1986 but closed in April 1988 to become a sports shop. {25411}

*Insider Media* – 7 April; photo taken August 2004

## DARTFORD (Kent)

Ambitious mixed regeneration has been proposed for Spital Street, which will transform the empty Co-op store into a hotel and retain its façade. However Muse Developments also plans for a cultural quarter including a cinema, restaurants, a public square and 120 homes. Local people have been promised input as the scheme develops, a short walk from the former Granada cinema, now a church.

*Kent Online* – 6 April; sent in by Martin Tapsell

## DAVENTRY (Northants)

Construction of the new four-screen Arc cinema was due to begin in March with erection of the steel frame. Handover was due for November this year.

*Daventry Express* – 12 March

## DERBY

According to the local paper there was a small fire in the kitchen area of the Cosmo restaurant on 4 March. It was extinguished very quickly. No one was hurt and the building was evacuated quickly. The fire brigade were on scene ventilating the building. This is housed in the former Gaumont. {14897}

*Sent in by Bob Taylor*

## DUNDEE

Plans to build a nine-screen cinema are currently on hold and may be abandoned.

*Evening Telegraph, Dundee* – 14, 22 February

## DURHAM

The Gala Theatre may lose one or both of its screens following the opening of a six-screen Odeon Luxe last June. A new Everyman is also due to open soon in the City. The Council-owned Gala Theatre complex contains a 500-seat theatre, a 114-seat cinema with a giant screen and a 72-seat auditorium. {24672}

*Hartlepool Mail* – 18 March

## EDINBURGH (Central)

The three-screen Edinburgh Filmhouse wants to relocate to a new purpose-built six-screen 900-seat underground venue at Festival Square. If permission is granted, it is hoped work could start in 2023 with the cinema opening in 2025.

*The Herald, Glasgow; Press & Journal; The Times* – 11 March; sent in by Tom Laughlan



## GALASHIELS (Borders)



The Pavilion celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. It was subdivided in 1995 and today operates as a four-screen cinema. The owners are looking for people's memories of the cinema; you can leave them on their website at [\[pavilioncinema.co.uk/memories\]](http://pavilioncinema.co.uk/memories). {27072}

ITV Report – 27 February; photo taken October 2009

## GATLEY (Stockport)



The former three-screen Tatton/Apollo closed about 2001 and was demolished soon after, except for the façade and the shops either side. New shared-ownership homes are to be built and the first seven have been released to buy off-plan. Eventually there will be another development for the over-55s, called The Picture House. {2536}

Manchester Weekly News – 13 February; photo taken June 2006

## GUILDFORD (Surrey)

Odeon has withdrawn their application to refurbish their nine-screen cinema and build two additional screens in the adjacent New Orleans restaurant. A spokesman said the move was "temporary". See p18 last Bulletin. {24711}

Surrey Live – 2 April; sent in by Geoff Gill

## The Projected Picture Trust

Dean Clough Mills, HALIFAX, HX3 5AX

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

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

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

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

[contact@ppttrust.org](mailto:contact@ppttrust.org)

[www.projectedpicturetrust.org](http://www.projectedpicturetrust.org)

## HUCKNALL (Notts)

The four-screen Arc cinema, a conversion of the former Byron was due to open on 27 March. It will have a total of 425 luxury leather electric recliner seats, digital laser projection and Dolby 7.1 sound. All screens will be wheelchair accessible.

Nottingham, Post – 4 March; Hucknall & Bulwell Dispatch – 6 March

## KIRKCALDY (Fife)

Plans have been approved for a new eight-screen cinema on The Esplanade.

Dundee Courier – 13 March; Evening Telegraph, Dundee – 18, 21 March

## LIVERPOOL (Wavertree)



The Co-op in the former Abbey cinema is to close and be replaced by a Lidl. The cinema opened in March 1939 and was converted for Cinerama in 1964. Films ceased in August 1979 and the stalls were converted into a supermarket. The circle was converted into a bingo club in 1984 and later was used for snooker. {44856}

Liverpool Echo – 5 March; sent in by Mike Taylor

## LONDON (Battersea)

The first retailers have signed up for the development of the Grade II listed former Battersea Power Station. There will be a cinema in the former boiler house. Opening is scheduled for the end of 2021.

Evening Standard – 2 March

## LONDON (Bermondsey)

The former Throwgood's furniture shop is to become a three-screen cinema. Opening was scheduled for summer next year. No operator has been named.

Southwark News – 27 February; South London Press – 13 March; sent in by Ian Mitchell

## LONDON (Burnt Oak)



There are plans to restore and extend the Grade II listed former Savoy. The façade will be restored and the auditorium space retained and used for flexible co-working. Extensions to the side and roof will provide 127 'micro flats' with shared amenity spaces, including a cinema, gym, library, lounges, laundry, dining and small events rooms. The building opened in June 1936 and films ceased in October 1961 in favour of bingo; that closed in October 2014. The CTA visited in September 2006. A copy of the documentation that was presented at a consultation evening on 24 February can be downloaded from [\[www.burntoakbroadway.com\]](http://www.burntoakbroadway.com). See Casework p6. {16555}

Sent in by Mike Collins; photo taken on CTA visit September 2006



### LONDON (Camden)

We reported on p 19 of the last Bulletin about a fire at the KOKO nightclub (ex Camden Palace) and said that the fire seemed to be centred in the dome. It has now been revealed that the dome acted as a kind of 'force field' and drew the fire away from the venue's theatre. The dome will be rebuilt with the help of Historic England.

*Evening Standard* – 17 February; sent in by Tom Laughlan

### LONDON (Croydon)

The 68-seat David Lean Cinema celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 3 March. Arts-related cuts caused it to close from April 2011 to March 2014. {21196}

*Croydon Advertiser* – 20 March

### LONDON (Holloway)



Concerns have been raised by the Islington Archaeological and Historical society over large blue signs attached to the Odeon Luxe. The cinema is being upgraded and will lose one of its eight screens. It opened as the Gaumont in September 1938 with 3,006 seats. {4300}

*Islington Tribune* – 6 March; sent in by Tom Laughlan; photo taken April 2012

### LONDON (Kentish Town)

An un-named regional operator is to take over the 60-seat cinema to be opened in the former North London Polytechnic building. The operator does not already have a cinema in the London area.

*Camden New Journal* – 6 February

### LONDON (White City)

A three-screen Electric cinema opened in October or November last year in the basement of the former BBC TV Centre at Wood Lane. It seats 42, 32 and 23 and has screen curtains.

Sent in by Tim McCullen

### MARLOW (Bucks)

Everyman has submitted a planning application for a two-screen cinema on the former Market Hall site.

*Marlow Free Press* – 7, 21 February, 27 March

### MINEHEAD (Somerset)



Work has started on a £170,000 project to replace the roof of the Regal. A new heating and ventilation system has already been installed in the building and a heat recovery unit will be fitted in the new roof as the work progresses. The work is being carried out in close co-operation with Pat Scott, who recently bought the next-door warehouse discount store – which used to be the Regal ballroom – and is

carrying out work on the building to convert it into a multi-screen cinema later in the year. The Regal opened in July 1934 as a 1,250-seat cinema and was twinned in November 1979. In February 1981 the stalls area was converted into a supermarket and the circle was extended forwards. Films ceased in October 1994 but it was later reopened as an amateur theatre with occasional film shows. {17968}

*Somerset County Gazette* – 10 March; photo taken August 2003

### NOTTINGHAM

The Broadmarsh Centre is currently undergoing a £89m regeneration. A new nine-screen Light cinema is part of the plans. Completion was expected by summer 2021.

*Nottingham Post* – 13 February, 9 March

### OAKHAM (Rutland)

Permission has been applied for to demolish the former Picture Theatre in South Street. It operated from about 1925 and was affectionately known as the 'Tin Tabernacle'. It closed in 1935 and has had several uses since but has been empty for several years. There's an article about the Picture Theatre in the *Rutland Local History & Record Society Newsletter* (1/19, April 2019, p9-12) available at [www.rutlandhistory.org/newsletters/201904.pdf] {50567}

*Rutland & Stamford Mercury* – 7 April

### OSWESTRY (Shropshire)



The former Regal and the neighbouring B Wise store could be transformed into a community hub featuring a cinema and a café. The buildings are on sale for £750,000 and the Regal Project Group hopes to raise the money by selling shares in the scheme and will also apply for grant funding. [www.theregalproject.org.uk]

*Shropshire Star* – 4 March; sent in by John Powell & Vic Harvey; photo taken April 2010

### PETERSFIELD (Hants)

The Council has increased its share of residents' council tax to raise £215,330 to repair and maintain the Festival Hall, also home to the New Savoy cinema. There are fears that if the roof isn't repaired quickly, the venue may have to close.

*Petersfield Post* – 4 March

### PLYMOUTH

The Plymouth Arts Cinema, now based at Plymouth College of Art, has received a £35,000 BFI Audience Award using funds from the National Lottery. The award will support the cinema's film programme and marketing costs to enable the it to further engage with young audiences across the City. The cinema moved from its original venue in Looe Street and doubled in size to a newly-refurbished 118-seat cinema at the College last year.

*The Herald, Plymouth* – 7 March

### PRESCOT (Merseyside)

The Council bought the Grade II listed former Palace in 2018 and is now looking to reopen it as a cinema. Half the funding for this and other regeneration projects will come from Historic England and half will be found by the Council from its own resources. The building opened in 1912 but closed in the mid-1950s. It then became a bingo club, later a furniture store and was last used as a church. See p25 Bulletin 50/2. {51658}

*Liverpool Echo* – 26 March

### PRESTON (Lancs)

Land for the new eight-screen Light cinema has been cleared, following the demolition of the old Market Hall car park. Building work is expected to begin in 2021.

*Lancashire Evening Post* – 18 February



### PWLLHELI (Gwynedd)

The Council is being asked for £570,000 for improvements to Neuadd Dwyfor to bolster visitor numbers. Improvements will include new seats. The centre attracted 52,000 visitors in 2018/19, but it was said that there was a need to show new films closer to their release dates and a need to invest in better technology. The venue is run by the Council. {26642}

*North Wales Live – 5 March; sent in by Margaret Burgoine*

### RICKMANSWORTH (Herts)

The 515-seat Watersmeet Centre has had a large electric roller screen installed at a cost of £30,000. Combined with the Dolby 5.1 sound system, the new upgrade is set to provide cinema-goers with an enhanced experience. The auditorium has a floor that can be level or raked at the touch of a button. {62071}

*Watford Observer – 21 February*

### ROCHDALE (Greater Manchester)

The new six-screen Reel cinema in the Riverside development was due to open on 10 April.

*Rochdale Observer – 4 March*

### ROTHERHAM (South Yorks)

Contracts were exchanged at the end of last year for a development incorporating a cinema in the town centre. It was originally to be five screens but that number has now been increased to eight. No operator or time scale has been announced.

*Rotherham Business News – 12 March*

### RYHOPE (Sunderland)



Work started in March to dismantle the former Grand prior to its re-erection at Beamish Museum. I was advised that the first stage would be to remove the roof tiles and also the FOH canopy and then proceed to the removal of the front of the building, working backwards to the stage area. Having seen no progress (except scaffolding on the canopy), I visited just prior to the 'travel ban' imposed on us all and the foreman told me that they had been knocked back a week by the trouble in removing the 'stained glass' windows each side of the stage. Instead of a full window removal, they had to remove the panels piece by piece to ensure no damage was done.

*Sent in by Bill Mather*

### SHREWSBURY

The Wightman Theatre closed last July when the lease was forfeited for non-payment of rent. There had been interest from an un-named independent cinema operator but that came to naught and the building will now be converted into offices. The Theatres Trust objected to the proposals but permission for change of use was granted

*Shropshire Star – 26 March*

### SOUTH SHIELDS (Tyne-side)

Permission has been granted to demolish the former Regent. It opened in October 1935 with 1,835 seats and a fully-equipped stage with fly tower. Films ceased in July 1966 and it became a bingo club, which closed in September 2014. Plans to turn it into 37 flats were approved three years ago but nothing happened and this is due to lapse later this year. A listing application was refused. A campaign to save the building has been started. {32774}

*Shields Gazette – 14 April; photo [top next column] taken September 2006*

### SOUTHEND-ON-SEA (Essex)

Plans have been dropped for a cinema and shops as part of the development of the new stadium at Fossetts Farm. Housing will be built instead. It means it will not compete with the planned cinema at Seaway.

*Basildon, Canvey & Southend Echo – 2 April*



**The Regent South Shields**

### STOCKPORT

Permission has been granted for the ten-screen Light cinema to have a six-lane ten-pin bowling alley added by expanding into a currently vacant neighbouring unit at its Redrock Site. It will be run by Light and accessed through the cinema's existing lobby. The cinema opened in November 2017. {56789}

*Manchester Evening News – 13 February*

### TAUNTON (Somerset)

It has been revealed that the 'local investor' that bought the eight-screen Odeon for £11m is the Town Council. However, concerns have been raised that they are risking public money and the National Audit Office has been asked to investigate. See p32 Bulletin 54/1. {13954}

*Western Daily Press – 4 March*

### THIRSK (North Yorks)



The Ritz has taken an opportunity to remove some historic speakers that were hidden behind the screen. They were disconnected long ago but left in situ. Now a vintage audio collector from Halifax has helped take them out. {3372}

*Easingwold Advertiser – 22 February; photo taken April 2015*

### WEDNESFIELD (Wolverhampton)

The fourteen-screen Cineworld at Bentley Bridge was due to open a 349-seat Superscreen on 13 March with a 4DX screen following on 27 March. The revamp of the site started last September and was due to be finished in May, when a ScreenX was to be unveiled. The foyer has also been refurbished.

*Express & Star – 6 March; Wolverhampton Chronicle – 12 March*

### WOLVERHAMPTON

Odeon has been named as the operator of a new cinema to be built as part of the Westside development. It will be a twelve-screen Odeon Luxe. Opening is set for summer 2022.

*Express & Star – 5 March*

### WORKINGTON (Cumbria)

Graves Limited has proposed building a three-screen cinema on top of Peel House, which currently houses shops and Opera Bingo; this moved from the former Opera House. The company has operated many cinemas in the area, including the current six-screen Plaza on the outskirts of the town.

*Workington Times & Star – 6 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock*



# LETTERS

## STREATHAM HILL THEATRE



A little typo crept into the news entry for the Streatham Hill Theatre on page 20 of the last Bulletin, whereby the initials of William George Robert Sprague, the designer of many late Victorian and early Twentieth Century theatres, have been scrambled in to the Great Western Railway! Easily done I would think.

Richard Gray

**Editor's Note:** Oops!

## MATTERS ARISING IN WINDSOR AND SLOUGH

I have some points regarding Jan/Feb Bulletin pages 8/9 referring to Windsor & Slough in early 1950s. On a family visit to Theatre Royal Windsor we sat in the balcony but there were no seats, just cushions on the steppings. A family visit to Adelphi Slough to see *Treasure Island* in the balcony there were hundreds of seats but very few cinema-goers in them. The brass plate in picture on page 29 (man & gong) looks very similar to the plates fitted to door openers at FOH of the Majestic Top Rank Suite in Luton, opened October 1962 in the former Palace/Gaumont. Several of these were found in a box in a storeroom when I was House Engineer in 64/65. They were the correct way round, about the size of a car badge and when polished up looked quite impressive on the radiator grille of a Ford Zodiac.

Vic Harvey

## LIVERPOOL CINEMAS

Further to my articles on p20 of Bulletin 54/1, Philip M Hanmer, born 1899, died 1970, ran Byrom Pictures Houses, part of Regent Enterprises based in Liverpool. He ran the Grand in Frodsham and the Tivoli Buckley, North Wales. Both cinemas closed in August 1961 and ran for a very short time on bingo. The Grand was demolished but the Tivoli still stands.

David A Ellis

## ELECTRIC PORTOBELLO ROAD DATES

I was interested to read Allen's comments in the last Bulletin about the wrong opening date being given in the January/February edition for the Electric Portobello Road. I agree that for such an early and significant cinema opening it is important for us to get the date right. It is annoying when erroneous information persists but once in print it is difficult to ensure correction. I hope you will forgive me for mentioning the Electric's entry in *Cinemas in Britain* (page 26) accords with what you say on page 25 of the last Bulletin, in that it received an operating license on 23 December 1910 (Martin Tapsell's research) and I have assumed it opened on the following day, Christmas Eve, some ten months later than 28 February. In London we have the prior opening of the Premier Electric in Harringay (16 April 1910). Interestingly, the last issue also has a Newsreel item on the Royal Pavilion Blackpool and is described as "quite possibly the oldest surviving purpose-built cinema building in Britain". I still hope to write this up soon for PH!

Richard Gray

Thank you Allen for setting the record straight (letter p25 last Bulletin). The opening dates, critical to the *Happy Birthdays* column in each Bulletin, were researched some eight years ago, so the origin of the erroneous date featured on p31 of Bulletin 54/1 cannot easily be identified. As opening dates do not change, it had not occurred to anyone to check these in case of errors. I apologise for any confusion caused.

Clive Polden

## GAUMONT WOOD GREEN

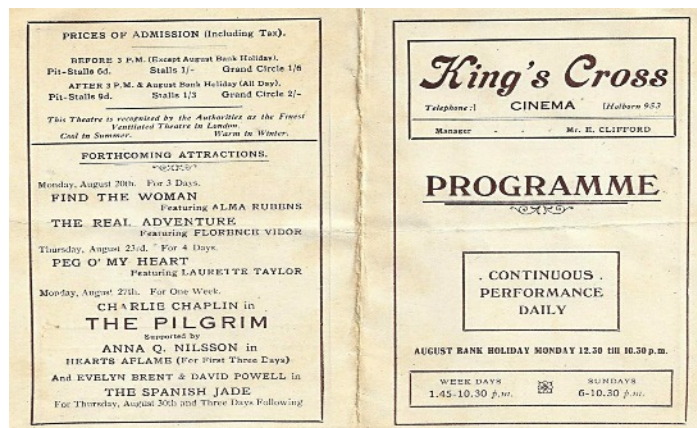
Thanks for the Gaumont Wood Green spread in the last issue. It's odd that 1970 refers to my early recollections as *Shane* was early 1950s. However, the original auditorium photo clearly illustrates my incorrect memory of the ceiling lighting! On Page 7 there's an illustration of a 'strip poster' for *HMS Ulysses*. This is rather odd as I understood that filming never started. I believe the making of the film was blocked by the Admiralty as the story featured a mutiny, which, I think, had actually occurred. Perhaps one of your readers is better informed than I am and can provide more accurate details concerning *HMS Ulysses*.

Michael Jones

**Editor's Note:** The three adverts I used as fillers came from a spread in *Picturegoer* magazine of March 1958. This is what Wikipedia has to say about the matter:

*HMS Ulysses* was the debut novel by Scottish author Alistair MacLean, originally published in 1955. MacLean's experiences in the Royal Navy during World War II provided the background and the Arctic convoys to Murmansk provided the basis for the story, which was written at a publisher's request after he'd won a short story competition the previous year. Some editions carry a prefatory note disavowing any connection between the fictional *HMS Ulysses* and the U-class destroyer of the same name. Film rights were bought by Robert Clark of Associated British Picture Corporation in the 1950s for £30,000. He arranged for a script to be written by RC Sheriff, who had just adapted *The Dambusters* for Associated British; because of the amount of naval detail included, it proved troublesome for Sheriff. However, ABPC never made the film.

## KINGS CROSS CINEMA



100 Years of The King's Cross Cinema (p12-13 last Bulletin). The money raised by the Save the Scala fundraising campaign did indeed cover the costs of the *Clockwork Orange* court case. But the reason why the cinema closed in June 1993 was that the lease ran out and the terms of renewal were beyond the company's reach at that time. For the full story see my book *Scala Cinema 1978-1993* (FAB Press), a copy of which has been donated to the CTA Archive and another copy of which is in the reading room of the BFI Southbank Library.

Jane Giles; 1923 programme image courtesy Ron Knee

## PETER KING OBITUARY

In the obituary for Peter King on p23 of the last Bulletin, the photograph was incorrectly dated it was taken in 1964 when he was elected President of the CEA. Also I have now been informed that in addition to being a patron of the CTA, in 1977 he was elected President of the Association (in succession to Eric Rhodes) which is when he used to take the chair at the Annual General Meetings.

Ray Dolling

## PICTURE HOUSE RAWTENSTALL

On p20 of the last Bulletin it says that the Picture House in Rawtenstall had three screens. According to the CTA 1980 *Directory of Cinemas* it was a Unit4 cinema with four screens, seating 121, 118, 165 and 118. This closed on 10 May 1984 and became a snooker club with a 121-seat cinema. This closed in June 1982 – has anyone got the exact date?

Tim McCullen





A couple of observations on the Jan/ Feb 2020 issue. I'm very sad the Curzon Eastbourne has closed. Originally the Picturedrome, this was one of the Randolph Richards seven cinemas that operated along the South coast, which were taken over by Classic cinemas in 1966. When Classic's managing director Eric Rhodes retired in 1973, the Curzon was apparently given to him as a leaving present. He later acquired the Curzon (former Essoldo) in Folkestone, which was tripled and then the Curzon St Leonards and the Classic Bexhill. Eric twinned these latter two cinemas, Bexhill also becoming a Curzon. The following year his son Gerald, Classic's film booking manager, left the company and took over all these except Eastbourne. Operating as Andego Enterprises, he later expanded his empire to include the Palace Devizes (a cinema that several people have had a go at) and the Regal Melton Mowbray; an unenviable spread of locations. He closed the Curzon St Leonards in January 1977 and the Curzon Folkestone was disposed of in 1985. Gerald is now aged 94. In more recent times the Curzon Eastbourne was run by Roy Galloway.



Visitors on the recent Bromley, Bellingham and Catford tour were deprived of a visit to the Astor Bromley, which had closed in 1977 and been demolished in the 1980s. The picture above [L], taken in 1974, shows what it looked like from the outside. The picture of the Odeon, above [R], which was almost opposite, was taken at the same time. The Astor was then being operated by Sydney Shurman, he of Panton Films and Coronet cinemas fame and was a very smart hall. The auditorium was T-shaped, the top portion of the T representing the screen end. It played the ABC South London release but as it did not advertise in the *London Evening Standard* I didn't discover it immediately when arriving to work in that part of the world.

Charles Morris

### LARGE AUDITORIA IN MULTIPLEXES

Over the last year I have been increasingly saddened to note the significant reduction of seating capacities in some of our larger screens. This has been compounded for me by the month-on-month reporting of many expensive new cinema builds with seating of 90 or less per screen. More like 'Viewing Lounges' than the Cinemas of even just 20 years ago. It would be great to at least be reassured by seeing photos of some of our largest, newer, screens. I am thinking of the 771-seater at the O2 Greenwich and the 650+ seaters at the former UGCs at Sheffield, Glasgow and Bolton. I've requested interior views from the operators but they will not release them to me for reasons of security. Has anyone out there been snapping?

Edward Huggins

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

### ROYAL PAVILION BLACKPOOL

Before we all rush to photograph "The first purpose-built cinema in the UK" [Royal Pavilion Blackpool, p16 last issue] may I point out that it was a conversion of a garage. It did indeed open as a cinema on 23 June 1909, not a theatre as is also mentioned but this is the first time I've heard it said that it was purpose-built. Blackpool's first P-B cinema was the Waterloo in 1912. I spent about half a dozen trips to Blackpool Library researching the town's cinemas.

Philip Mayer

I wonder if Philip Mayer has any documentary evidence that the Royal Pavilion is a conversion of a garage? It's an odd-looking building, being high with a balcony, I think from the start. In other words quite unlike the almost standard pre-WWI single-storey cinemas. This aspect of it is worrying characteristic for an early purpose-built but at the same time a tall building is not much like a garage either. The Southport Grand Casino (listed Grade II) is a garage conversion and looks it and the other one is, I think, the Electric in Station Street, Birmingham but this dates from the middle of 1910.

Richard Gray

## INTERNET CORNER

- ★ If you Google "former cinemas" and look at the 'images' page, there are hundreds of them. If you add "abandoned" or "derelict" to the search, it brings up even more.
- ★ [[www.derelictlondon.com/cinemas.html](http://www.derelictlondon.com/cinemas.html)] Some excellent photos of former cinemas in London; links to other derelict buildings too.
- ★ [[tinyurl.com/tyftw22](http://tinyurl.com/tyftw22)] From the *Manchester Evening News* – The most beautiful cinemas around Greater Manchester.
- ★ [[longfordcinema.co.uk](http://longfordcinema.co.uk)] A website for the Longford/Essoldo cinema in Stretford, Manchester. Links on the home page and also a 'video' section with a 'wobbly' [probably ex VHS] of a film show held in the building when on bingo in the 1980s.
- ★ [[tinyurl.com/qlo2tmz](http://tinyurl.com/qlo2tmz)] An amusing clip posted from a French film of 1952 shows a chase through the lobby, auditorium (both sadly brief), stage, organ chamber and roof of the sadly long-vanished Gaumont Palace Paris. The organist seems to handle the intrusion pretty well and the scene on the roof is pretty scary.  
*Sent in by Bob Bradshaw*
- ★ [[incinerama.com](http://incinerama.com)] A comprehensive history of Cinerama and its theatres around the world. Surprisingly, I don't think I have come across this before.
- ★ [[tinyurl.com/ungbplw](http://tinyurl.com/ungbplw)] From *Kent OnLine* – Six former cinemas in Kent and how they have changed over the years.  
*Sent in by Philip Stevens*
- ★ [[www.facebook.com/parkwaybarnsley](http://www.facebook.com/parkwaybarnsley)] The Facebook page of the Parkway cinema in Barnsley. Has guided tours on video of the cinema and also its sister cinema, the Station Richmond (Yorks).
- ★ [[tinyurl.com/y9ka89u7](http://tinyurl.com/y9ka89u7)] From *Wales Online* – the story of the Albert Hall in Swansea.
- ★ [[tinyurl.com/y78u5vzq](http://tinyurl.com/y78u5vzq)] From the *South Wales Argus* – A look back at the cinemas in the history of Blackwood.



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

## 110 years

Charing Cross Electric 508 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.  
Opened 12 May 1910, architect unknown, B listed. *No Image.*

## 105 years

Grosvenor 137 Grosvenor Street, All Saints, Manchester.  
Opened 19 May 1915, architect unknown, grade II listed. *No image.*

## 100 years



Savoy/Gaumont/Odeon, 42 Victoria Street, Grimsby.  
Opened 24 May 1920, architect unknown, grade II listed.

## ARCHIVE

The Archive is temporarily closed due to government restrictions relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. Any enquiries received will be handled once the Archive reopens.

### 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].

### ARCHIVE OPPORTUNITIES

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

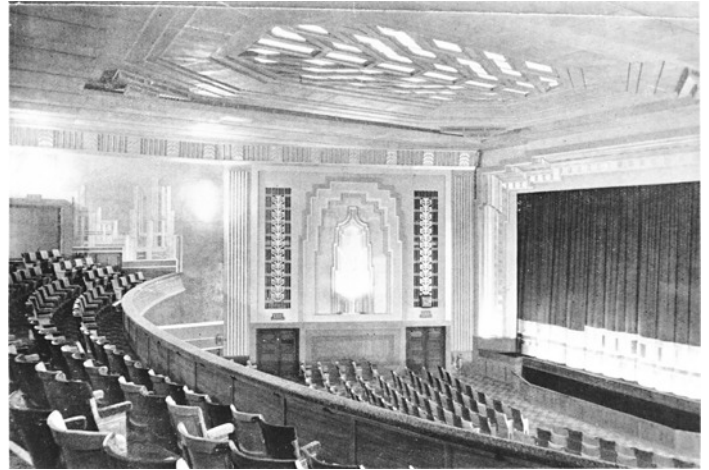
### HELP THE ARCHIVE IDENTIFY CINEMAS

Brian Hall posts regular weekly sets of unidentified cinema photographs on the CTA-UK 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].

Member Darron Keeling has produced an album on Flickr of past 'mystery' pictures. [tinyurl.com/uomjyom]

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

## 85 years



Odeon/Everyman, Great North Road, Barnet.  
Opened 15 May 1935, architect Edgar Simmons, grade II listed.



Odeon 18 Walliscote Road, Weston Super Mare.  
Opened 25 May 1935, architect T Cecil Hewitt, grade II listed.

## 80 years



Regal/ABC 262 Camberwell Road, Camberwell.  
Opened 17 June 1940, architect Leslie H Kemp, grade II listed.

### QUOTATIONS

Another cinematic quotation from the list sent by Gavin McGrath:

- ♦ I kept the same suit for six years – and the same dialogue.  
We just changed the title of the picture and the leading lady.

Robert Mitchum



## MEMBERSHIP

### NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new members:  
Mary Payne, Graham Webster, Jenny Hansford and Alice Miller.

### DONATIONS

Once more members have displayed their generosity by adding a donation to the renewal of their subscriptions. Our sincere thanks go to: WA Bates, PT Bayley, DP Brown, PF Chapman, PJ Chester, J Clarkson, P Cooper, E Cranch, LJ Deacon, MS Derriman, ET Faulkner, PJA Ferrari, RJ Fox, PH Garrick, GC Gibson, A Goodwin, E Griffiths, BW Harries, SA Jarvis, K Johnston, SB Kay, M King, JM Knight, C Lobb, A Maltby, PV Marie, AE McCann, JW Perkins, JE Prickett, PJ Roberts, NJ Ruben, JM Seligmann, JM Sturdy, DJ West, TK Williams, J Wootton, MJT Yallop and PG Yaxley,

### CTA MEMBERSHIP

I would like to thank members for their continuing support under these very trying times. Cheque payments into our bank account are proving more difficult to process at this time; this may result in your cheque not being debited from your account within the normal time frame. Please take care and best wishes.

Ray Ritmeester, Membership Secretary

## 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** to purchase: Pre-War *Kinematograph Weekly* magazines, ABC News and anything related to Bournemouth or Dorset Cinemas.  
David Eve [evecinema@talk21.com]

## NECROLOGY

### PEARL CARR 98

One half of a singing duo with husband Teddy Johnson, whose passing was recorded on p26 of Bulletin 52/5 [Sept/Oct 2018]. Probably best known for winning the Eurovision Song Contest with *Sing, Little Birdie* in 1959.

### MICHAEL MEDWIN OBE 96

Many of us remember Michael for his role in the TV series *The Army Game* in the 1950s. His large screen career started in 1946 and encompassed over 80 films, including *Doctor at Sea*, *Carry on Nurse*, *The Longest Day* and *Scrooge*. He founded a production company and produced several films, including *If* with Lindsey Anderson.

### HONOR BLACKMAN 94

James Bond met his match in Honor Blackman's Pussy Galore in the 1964 film *Goldfinger*. She also appeared in other films, including *Shalako* and *The Virgin and the Gypsy*. On TV Honor played Cathy Gale in *The Avengers*.

### STUART WHITMAN 92

Stuart's film career took off when he gained a role in *The Mark* (1961). He appeared in well over 100 films, including *The Comancheros*, *The Longest Day* and *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*. On TV he was in *Highway Patrol* and *The Cimarron Strip*.

### MAX VON SYDOW 90

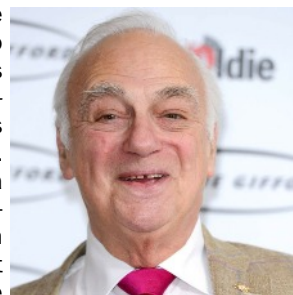
Max's career spanned more than 60 years and he appeared in more than 100 films and TV series. His roles included Jesus in *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, Ming The Merciless in *Flash Gordon* and Blofeld in *Never Say Never Again*.



## OBITUARY

### ROY HUDD OBE 83

Roy's career lasted over 60 years but he worked almost entirely on stage, radio and television – surprisingly he had parts in only a few films, including *Up The Chastity Belt*. He hosted BBC Radio 2's series *The News Huddlines* from 1975 to 2001. He introduced *Movie Memories* on Anglia TV from 1981 to 1985, which once included a memorable interview with Charles Hawtrey, who was so drunk that he could hardly speak and at one stage slid off his chair and on to the floor!



He appeared in *Coronation Street* as undertaker Archie Shuttleworth and played Bud Flanagan in the BBC drama *We're Doomed! The Dad's Army Story* and in *Underneath The Arches* at the Prince of Wales Theatre. In 1977 he starred as Fagin in the West End revival of Lionel Bart's musical *Oliver!* He wrote several books on music hall, re-recorded music hall records, and appeared in the music hall revival show *The Good Old Days*. He was seen by broadcasters as an authority on the subject and was the longstanding President of the British Music Hall Society

He also was a patron of the CTA – elected in 1974 following his role in the documentary *An Acre of Seats in a Garden of Dreams*, which was premièred at the NFT on 17 October 1973. Roy appeared both as himself and in a variety of comic guises.

## MISCELLANY

### CINEMA MUSEUM

The on-line petition to save the Cinema Museum in Kennington has passed the 50,000 signature mark. You can add your signature at [tinyurl.com/y9jgubrv]. To find out more about the Museum's background and current situation, go to [tinyurl.com/vieoay9].

Sent in by Robert Holden & Derek Threadgall

### LICK AND LET DRY



The Royal Mail has issued a set of ten stamps to mark the [delayed] release of the 25<sup>th</sup> James Bond movie *No Time to Die*. They feature the six 007 actors and some of the Bond vehicles.

Daily Mail – 18 February; sent in by Barry Quinton

### VINTAGE FILM POSTERS

Investing in vintage film posters can pay dividends with some seeing their value double in the last decade. A rare French poster for *Casablanca* is valued at up to £80,000 and a giant four-sheet poster – the only one known to exist – for a 1946 Italian release of the same film sold for £360,000 in 2017. One of the rarest early posters is for the 1927 Fritz Lang classic *Metropolis* as only five are known to survive and each is worth at least £425,000. Early horror film posters are amongst the most collectible. This one for the 1931 film *Dracula* with the portrait of Bela Lugosi sold for £400,000 three years ago.

Mail on Sunday – 15 March; sent in by Barry Quinton



### BAD HAIR DAY

A woman who went to see *Frozen 2* with her children at the Vue in Meadowhall [Sheffield] in January found her view blocked by a woman with a huge bun sitting in front. She couldn't move seats as the cinema was full that day. She posted a photo of the offending hairstyle on-line and it went viral; comments came in from all over the world.

Derbyshire Times – 15 January; sent in by Terry Hanstock



# HOLIDAY SNAPS



④ Here is a pic of the beautifully repainted exterior of the **Ideal Cinema Theatre** in Nice, photographed in the late November sun. According to [www.architecture-art-deco.fr] it opened in 1907 and accommodated 500. We ventured through the smoked glass doors and were politely welcomed by the (very) high-end travel agent, which now uses the space as an open-plan office. The curved balcony remains, in use as a mezzanine. So does the original square screen on the inside of the curved wall behind the decorative pillars in the centre of the frontage. A pity about the hideous new windows on either side.

Rachel & Giles Woodforde



Here are three holiday snaps from Argentina.

- ① The town of Azul has the Flix Cinema in what was once a church.
- ② Also in Azul, the monumental San Martin is now a cultural centre but was closed for renovation in November 2019.
- ③ The cinema in Balcarce, taken in November, seems to have reopened relatively recently as a single-screen cinema by CC cinemas, a small local chain. The inscription *Cine Moderno* on the façade seems to be original to the building.

Bob Bradshaw



⑤ & ⑥ I was working in Pondicherry on the east coast of India last year, when I came across this old cinema, with the Pathé logo still intact on the entrance. The cinema is now a theatre and most of the building is still in one piece.

John Altman