



CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

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

# BULLETIN

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



The Artrix arts centre in Bromsgrove (Worcs) which has ceased trading. 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.

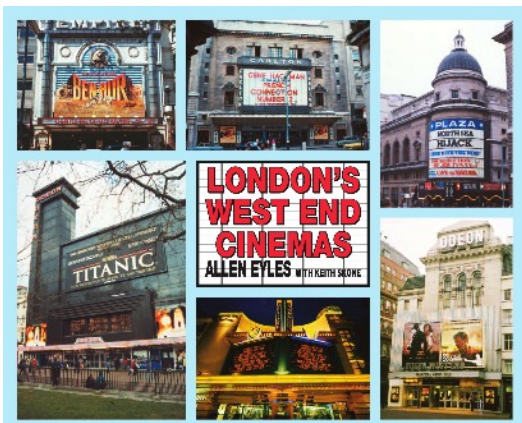
As I was finishing this Bulletin, better news was beginning to trickle in. Some cinemas abroad have reopened. In this country some building work has recommenced. I hope for and expect more positive news by the time you read this. Elsewhere in this issue are three articles on the effect of the virus on 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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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 p4.  
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## CINEMA IN A TIME OF COVID-19

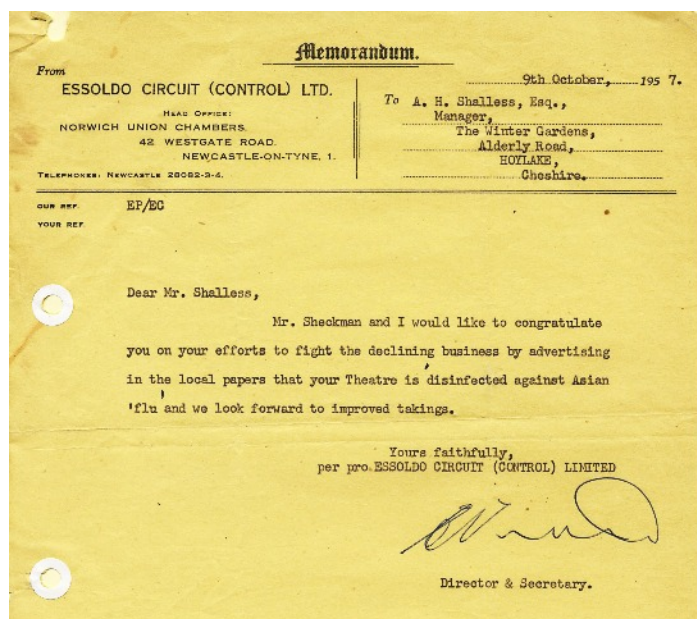
### By David Trevor-Jones, CTA Chairman

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* canon, 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; Majestic 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; Majestic 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 p4.

## New Publications

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

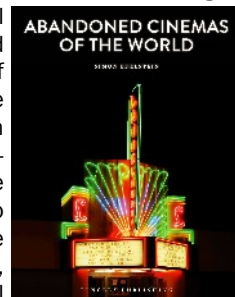
Frank Matcham (1854-1920) was one of the most prolific and successful theatre architects of his generation and in the centenary year of his death, the Frank Matcham Society has published this excellent and comprehensive guide to his work. After an entertaining introduction by John Earl, there is a directory 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 skillful 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.



## 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.

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.

*Photo taken September 2006.*

**More Casework in the full Bulletin**

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 Neveill 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



# 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.



# 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]

**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]

*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/3ba0fUj]. {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

Three More pages of Newsreel  
in the full Bulletin



# 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

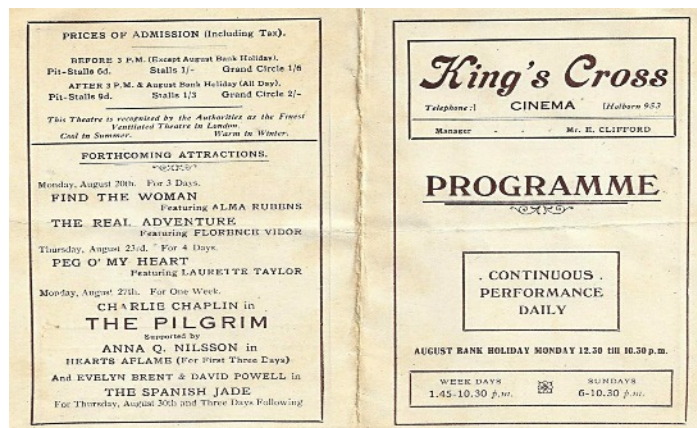
Thanks for the Gaumont Wood Green spread in the last issue. It's odd that 1970 refers to my early recollections as *Shane* was early 1950s. However, the original auditorium photo clearly illustrates my incorrect memory of the ceiling lighting! On Page 7 there's an illustration of a 'strip poster' for *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

Another two pages of letters  
in the full Bulletin



# 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 *Ciné 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