



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

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The Byron Hucknall getting ready to reopen as the four-screen Arc – see Newsreel p15; photo taken 21 May 2020

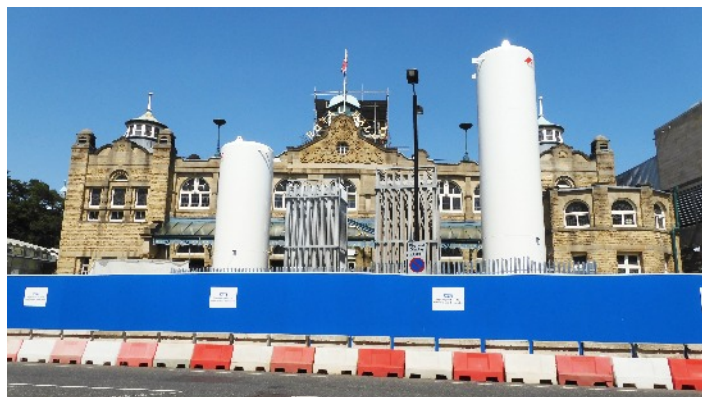


The former Palace at Wincobank, Sheffield, which is on the market – see Newsreel p17; photo taken August 2005

FROM YOUR EDITOR

UK members will have already found a supplement with this Bulletin containing the Committee reports that would normally have been presented at the AGM. For reasons of economy of postage, we are not sending it to overseas members but it can be downloaded from the CTA website [www.cta-uk.org] – use the link **LATEST EVENTS >** on the left of the front page.

During the lockdown many cinemas have been taking the opportunity to do maintenance work or decorating; several examples are given in the newsreel section of this Bulletin. As all cinemas have been closed, it is obviously impossible to list what every cinema is doing and when every cinema plans to reopen, so if your cinema is not mentioned, I can only apologise. In any case, the facts change so quickly that a lot of the information printed will be out of date by the time you read it!



Here in Harrogate part of the exhibition centre has been turned into a Nightingale Hospital, which hasn't actually been used – yet! The picture above shows two oxygen tanks on the forecourt in front of Matcham's Royal Hall – at least it's reversible.

Harry Rigby, Editor CTA Bulletin

VISITS AND EVENTS

Unfortunately, as you all know, we are still in a 'lockdown' mode, despite what the government tells us. So all our visits and events are still on hold for the foreseeable future. If the situation changes we will announce our plans on the CTA website [www.cta-uk.org] or on the CTA e-News page for those members signed up to receive it, or by an updated message on the CTA Visits' Hotline (ansaphone) 020 8800 8393 otherwise hoping for better news in the next edition of the Bulletin.

Ken Roe



An advert for *Bwana Devil* in 3D – see p9

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
THURSDAY 20 AUGUST**

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

Company limited by guarantee. Reg. No. 04428776.

Registered address: 59 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, TW11 0DJ.

Registered Charity No. 1100702. Directors are marked † in list below.

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise; items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor. Please state if you require items to be returned and enclose SAE, otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.

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

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

Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby

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

Visits' registration hotline ansaphone : 020 8800 8393

PUBLICATIONS

Back Numbers Available

PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

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

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

Recently Published (reviewed in last Bulletin)

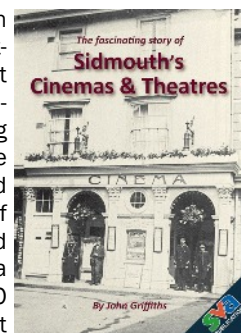
The Matcham Directory – £10.00 plus postage

Abandoned Cinemas of the World – £29.50 plus postage

Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

Sidmouth's Cinemas & Theatres by John Griffiths. 40 pages, A5 softback, illustrated, ISBN9781916213418. Price £3.00 (plus postage), available from Sidmouth Museum: [www.sidvaleassociation.org.uk].

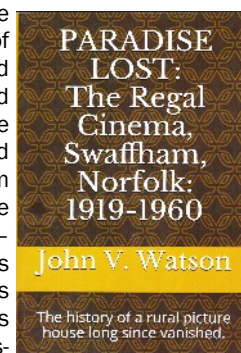
CTA member John Griffiths has written an attractive book about the entertainment attractions of this South Devon resort – the first time this has been attempted. Some 15 venues are described and illustrated, including an open-air bandstand and theatre, a private hotel cinema, early film shows in halls and purpose-built theatres and cinemas. Two of the venues have stood the test of time and are still active today – the **Manor Pavilion**, a theatre and occasional cinema for nearly 130 years and the **Radway Theatre/Cinema**, built in 1928, which still operates as a single-screen cinema – the CTA has visited on a couple of occasions. The book includes a map of the venues and a section about local photographer and cinema pioneer, Arthur W Ellis. Well recommended.



Paradise Lost: The Regal Cinema, Swaffham 1919-60 by John V Watson. 620 pages, softback, illustrated.

ISBN 9798640712827. Available through Amazon, price £32.98 but see below for special offer to CTA members.

This lengthy book tries to piece together the history of the **Regal** in the small Norfolk town of Swaffham. The author writes that he has found it a difficult task with few available sources and no photographs of the cinema when in use. The book begins with a history of the cinema and then continues with appendices explaining film distribution and exhibition and details of the films shown at the **Regal** from 1931 to 1960 – the years from 1953-54 are from the author's own film-going records. There are descriptions of each film and many are illustrated with stills and posters. There is also a history of the Bostock Cinema Circuit.



Special Offer: the author has kindly offered CTA members a reduced price on a limited edition of 10 copies, numbered and signed by him. A dedication can be added if requested. To order, please send a cheque for £28.00 (including postage) payable to John V Watson to: Flat 9, Wellington Court, 8 Auckland Close, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 2FH. Email: [great.classic.movies@gmail.com]. Make sure you include your name, address, email, phone number and wording for any dedication.



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.

LATE NEWS



BOURNEMOUTH

The former Palace Court Theatre in Hinton Road is up for sale. It opened in June 1931 as a venue for an amateur drama company. In 1970 the former green room on the lower ground floor was converted into the Galaxy Cinema whilst the main 595-seat theatre was re-named the Playhouse Theatre and operated as a repertory theatre. But dwindling attendances meant that the Playhouse became a full-time cinema like the Galaxy. It was most recently used as a church. The Estate Agent has a three-minute video with some good shots inside the building. [youtu.be/5z7PWC7DJfM] [27469]

Estate Agent's particulars; sent in by Philip Stevens; photo taken May 2006

LONDON (Chelsea)

A new Everyman is due to open in King's Road on 24 July. It is built on the site of the demolished four-screen Cineworld (ex Essoldo/Classic). It has two 190-seat auditoria and a smaller screening room, all at first-floor level with shops on the ground floor and flats above.

KWC London - 29 June

CINEMA BUSINESS

CINEWORLD

Shares in Cineworld soared after the chain said it will reopen its 128 cinemas when restrictions are lifted. The stock suffered a 90% decline between New Year and mid-March as the Covid-19 pandemic hammered its business. Shares have now risen from a low of 21p to 93.8p, up 21% on the day but down more than 50% this year. The company has cancelled its dividend and suspended executive's pay.

*Daily Mail - 9 April, 29 May, 24 June; The Times - 12 May
sent in by Margaret Burgoine, Barry Quinton & Tom Laughlan*

Cineworld has scrapped its \$2.8bn deal to buy Cineplex claiming certain "breaches of contract" were made by the Canadian company. Cineplex insisted the charges were wrong and vowed to see Cineworld in court.

Global News - 12 June

AMC

US Movie theater chain AMC warned that it may not survive the coronavirus pandemic, which has closed its theaters. It is rumoured that Amazon has held talks about a potential takeover.

Mail on Sunday - 10 May; Daily Independent [US] - 3 June; sent in by Barry Quinton

ODEON BANS UNIVERSAL PICTURES

Films from Universal Pictures are no longer going to be shown in Odeon cinemas because of a bitter row over how movies are released. The ban by AMC Theatres, Odeon's parent company, comes after Universal released *Trolls On Tour* digitally because of the coronavirus outbreak, meaning the animated film was available in homes immediately.

Sky News - 29 April; The Sun - 30 April; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Barry Quinton

COVID-19 EMERGENCY FUNDING

The BFI has repurposed £1.3m of National Lottery funding to offer critical relief and business continuity to exhibitors across the UK. The Fund has supported 130 Film Audience Network members across the UK with awards ranging from £415 to £23,000 each. These include MacRobert Arts Centre in Stirling, Jam Jar Cinema in Whitley Bay, Magic Lantern in Tywyn and Bounce Cinema in London, supporting exhibitors who often representing the only cultural offer in their local area.

BFI Press Release - 12 June

Your Editor has been unable to find a complete list of award recipients and it would be impractical to print all 130 beneficiaries so here are those where we have received detailed information.

- ♦ Harwich (Essex) Electric Palace: £5,905
- ♦ London (East Finchley) Phoenix: £9,400 also £25,000 at the beginning of the pandemic from the government emergency support for the leisure sector.
- ♦ Malvern (Worcs) Malvern Theatres: £15,000
- ♦ Monmouth Savoy: £10,000
- ♦ Wolverhampton Lighthouse: £14,991

CARTOON CORNER



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

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

TWO LIVERPOOL CINEMAS

West Derby Picture House.

By David A Ellis

West Derby became the home to the West Derby Picture House, opening on Saturday 30 July 1927 to an invited audience. It was claimed to be the most popular cinema outside the City. At the time the cinema was built there was no other cinema within a radius of one mile.

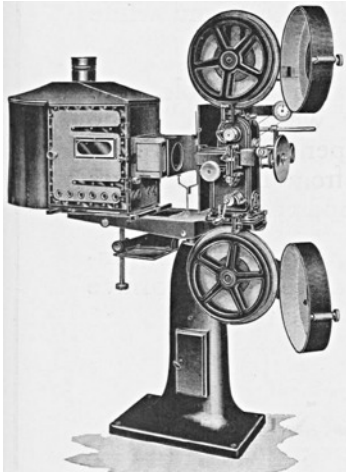


The official opening took place On Monday 1 August. The opening attraction was *The King of the Turf*, the second feature was *Blue Ribbon*. The management said, park your motor car, combination, bicycle or shanks' pony at the Picture House. Films were booked at the theatre. It was designed by Liverpool architect Lionel AG Prichard and had seating for 939. These were plush tip-up types. It was stated that the crush hall could accommodate over one hundred people.

The owners were the West Derby Picture House Co Ltd, whose registered capital was £10,000. Directors included Horatio Kenton, Alfred Adams and H Trevor Ellis. Charles Radcliffe was the first manager. Lighting in the main auditorium was concealed behind mouldings at the top of the walls. Over three hundred lamps in five colours were fitted and by manipulating switches thirty different shades of illumination were obtained. The stage lighting was fitted on battens and the screen was illuminated in a variety of shades.

It was the first cinema in Liverpool to install Ernemann Imperator 11 projectors [R]. The orchestra was styled the 'Neapolitan Grand Orchestra', comprising six musicians under the direction of Thomas Hornsby. Two performances were given nightly and there were daily matinées.

Talkies arrived on 13 October 1930 with the showing of *Paris*; a new BTH system was installed for this. According to *The Bioscope* dated 30 April 1930, it said, the manager, a Mr HNK Hudson, is due to commence showing talking pictures with BTH apparatus on 5 May. The opening feature will be *King of the Khyber Rifles*.



By 1954 it was listed as having 917 seats. Films were booked from the Empress cinema in Runcorn, Cheshire County Cinemas having taken them over in 1946. By around 1950 matinées had been dispensed with and it was evening performances only. In October 1955 CinemaScope was installed with four-track magnetic sound. The first CinemaScope offering was *There's No Business Like Show Business*, from 24 October 1955. The doors finally closed on 5 January 1960 with *The Mouse That Roared* plus *Juke Box Rhythm*. The building was converted into a supermarket.

Empress Tuebrook

By David A Ellis

The Empress cinema Tuebrook made its first appearance on 20 February 1915 with *Kismet*. The building was described as looking like an old English mansion, with the added attraction of tapestry. It was situated in Derby Road and the exterior was built with imitation stone. It was an imposing building having a classical elevation and Roman Iconic Pillars on the second storey. The Empress cost £8,000 to build and was erected by Campbell and Fairhurst of Liverpool. The entrance hall had two quaint inglenooks with polished beams of oak and the walls had oak panelling. There were what was described as two old-fashioned coal fire places in the entrance hall.



The stairs to the entrance hall were in Sicilian marble and the maple flooring was supplied by HD Dodd of Liverpool. A month before opening it was stated that the seating would be for 1,200. Later it was stated that seating was 910. Shortly before opening the 6d seating was reorganised, which reduced seating, taking away 68 seats. The proscenium end of the hall was draped in rich purple velour, trimmed and embroidered with shades of gold. The door and window hangings were of blue, which matched the carpet.

Seating was the tip-up type, apart from a few rows of benches at the front. The projection room was spacious, housing Gaumont's latest projectors. The picture throw was one hundred feet and the screen size back in 1915 eighteen feet by fourteen. There were two waiting rooms, each accommodating three hundred people. Outside there was a veranda, which provided additional cover. Illumination was by eight Superlux Hemisphere pilot lights, consisting of handmade Gothic type brass brackets with lanterns, which gave the hall a beautiful and warm appearance.

The owner was a Mr T Halliwell Hughes. He was the managing director of others, including the Magnet Wavertree, Liverpool. The first manager was Walter Bell. There were at the time of opening two performances nightly and matinées took place on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. There was an orchestra under a Mr S Gee. The orchestra pit was separated from the front gangway by a dark curtain on a brass rail. In 1926 the cinema engaged a new orchestra under the leadership of Eunice Kyle, who with pianist Tony Hargreaves proved a popular attraction. Manager at the time a Mr Geo A Jones installed a radio in the foyer to entertain waiting patrons. In 1927 former projectionist of the Beresford, Mr ND Doddy became manager.

From March 1928 the cinema was run by Denman Picture Houses Ltd. Talkies arrived on 31 March 1930 with *The Great Gabbo*. Though some sources say it was equipped with British Acoustic, the *Bioscope* dated 26 November 1929 says Powers' Cinéphone was installed. CinemaScope made an appearance on 20 March 1955 with *Sign of the Pagan*. Also in August 1955 a fifteen-year-old boy with another aged sixteen set fire to the building causing around £2,000 worth of damage to the stage and screen.

Closure came on 12 March 1960 with *House of the Seven Hawks*. The building was another victim of progress, demolished to make way for a dual carriageway.

QUOTATIONS

Another cinematic quotation from the list sent by Gavin McGrath:

- ◆ Yesterday I saw a movie so embarrassing, I asked the woman in front of me to put her hat back on again.

Robert Orben

Kenneth More • Betsy Drake
"NEXT TO NO TIME"
 Eastman Colour • A Henry Cornelius Production

THE HISTORY OF THE FORUM CINEMA EALING

By Robert Gurd

Forum Cinema (1934): designed by JS Beard in classical style as a reaction to the then fashionable art deco style.

Closed in 2008 (as Empire Cinema).

The early Twentieth Century was very much the golden age of cinema building and Ealing had two good examples. The first was the **Walpole Picture Theatre** in Bond Street, which was built in 1912 in an old skating hall to designs by John Stanley Beard and was demolished in 1981, although the façade arch still remains near to the site just off Mattock Lane. The former **Empire** cinema was built as the **Forum**, also designed by Beard with John Clare, in classical style as a reaction to the then very fashionable art deco style. There is a contemporary film showing its construction [youtu.be/Lfjsn7hu8o4] and it alludes to this point. The cinema was opened in 1934 and the Gracie Fields film *Love, Life and Laughter* – made at Ealing Studios down the road – was the first to be shown. It was one of two near identical cinemas built for the developer Herbert Yapp (the other was in Kentish Town and survives – now Grade II listed – to this day). Each cinema seated 2,175 on two levels and each had a large stage with fully equipped fly tower.

Herbert Yapp assured its patrons on the opening night that great pains had been taken to ensure that their “every desire and every need would be more than adequately catered for in the new building: the **Forum** is the last word in cinema construction and is the result of the best combination of British capital, British material and British labour!” The colour scheme of the theatre was restrained, carried out in green and gold with seating in three colours. Over the entrance there was a tea lounge and dance hall (with a sprung dance floor) in which patrons could enjoy tea dances and be served with teas and light refreshments. Behind the tea lounge was a foyer giving access to the grand circle, providing settees and comfortable chairs for the use of patrons. The owner chose the latest sound equipment produced by Western Electric, “the pioneers of ‘talkie’ equipment in this country”. The seating was upholstered with Dunlopillo cushioning “which repelled germs, moths and vermin”. Heating was provided by oil fired boilers (very advanced for its time) with thermostatic control of the temperature and ventilation.

Over the years the cinema had various owners and changes of name and was tripled in 1975. The original ‘Forum Wonder Organ’ was removed in the 1960s, rebuilt by its original makers (John Compton of Acton) as a classical organ and survives in regular use in the chapel of Wormwood Scrubs prison! When it was briefly owned by Virgin (1996-2000) the cinema was refurbished and some original features reinstated. When subsequently owned by **Cineworld** it was part of a forced sale to **Empire Cinemas**, the new UK subsidiary of a successful Irish cinema operator and there were great hopes that money would be invested in the site to improve the cinema. Instead, **Empire** decided to demolish the building to redevelop the site jointly with an Irish development partner. A revised planning application for a new cinema with sixteen screens behind the existing retained locally-listed façade, based on an earlier unexecuted scheme, was eventually approved in 2008.



The rear of the façade, supported by scaffolding in May 2016

The cinema finally closed in September 2008, by which time it had become very run down and was demolished shortly afterwards. Some plasterwork, light fittings and stained-glass windows were salvaged

and placed in store. Some original wooden doors were saved, to be installed in the **Forum Kentish Town**, replacing ones lost in that building over the years. There is a film [youtu.be/rXCXX5K41jg] about the cinema made shortly after its closure recording its evolution over time and some of its interior features.

Unfortunately, the ambitious redevelopment plans became the casualty of the 2007/8 financial crisis when **Empire's** developer went bust leaving the site in limbo for many years despite various attempts, including by Ealing Council, local people and the Ealing Civic Society, to get building work to start. **Empire** gave many assurances that “work would start shortly” but successive deadlines set by the Council for work to start expired. Eventually, the Council lost patience with **Empire** and, together with a development partner (Land Securities) instituted compulsory purchase order (CPO) proceedings against them. In the meantime, the Council forced **Empire** to erect a temporary scaffolding structure to safeguard the stability of the retained façade. This turned out to be a prudent measure since the façade would remain standing in isolation for over ten years.

The CPO hearing took place in April/May 2015 by which time Land Securities had received consent to revised plans for redevelopment of the wider site, which included acquisition of buildings in Bond Street (**YMCA** and **Walpole House** – site of the former **Walpole Picture Theatre**). The revised plans – incorporating around 150 flats above commercial ground floor uses – envisaged a new eight-screen cinema block behind Bond Street rather than behind the restored façade, which would instead be incorporated into residential flats with retail on the ground floor. The Council was granted the CPO later in the year and the land passed to Land Securities, together with the stored artefacts. Land Securities announced that the cinema would be operated by **Picturehouse** but sold the site to **St George** in 2017. Further delays ensued whilst **St George** sought permission to revise the plans resulting in less commercial floor space and even more residential units, including affordable homes. These changes resulted in further increases in the height of the development, which would now soar up to nine storeys behind the retained façade. A regrettable loss brought by the scheme was demolition of the **YMCA** building (dating from around 1900) but the important foundation stones which included early inscriptions by the famous artist and sculptor **Eric Gill** were salvaged and placed on permanent loan to the **Ditchling Museum of Arts & Crafts** in Sussex.



The façade uncovered

St George was granted consent for the revised scheme in 2018 and preparatory demolition (including of the **YMCA** building) was started later that year. Construction of the residential elements continued in 2019 and 2020 although the Covid-19 crisis has delayed work. The original cinema façade has recently been uncovered, as its incorporation into the new-build behind progressed. **Picturehouse** indicated at the end of 2019 that they would not gain possession of the shell of the new building on Bond Street housing the new cinema until the middle of 2020 and that fit-out was unlikely to be completed until 2021 – twelve years after the original cinema was demolished.

The author is a former Chairman of the Ealing Civic Society

IMPRESSION OF THE FORUM EALING

from the *West Middlesex Gazette* 21 April 1934



The new Forum Cinema, Ealing, will be officially opened by Mr Jack Buchanan, the stage and screen star, on Monday afternoon. Below a *West Middlesex Gazette* representative gives his impression of the new cinema.

Full of novel features is the new Forum, which is now undergoing the finishing touches. The first is revealed in the entrance foyer, where semi-circle counters have been let in from the two shops on either side, thus serving patrons as well as the general public. At these counters there will be confectionery and cigarettes on one side and flowers on the other. There are 1,339 seats in the stalls and 836 in the circle. Patrons will be able to see the programme downstairs for 9d, 1s, or 1s/10d and upstairs for 1s/10d and 2s/6d. The afternoon prices up to three-o'clock will be 7d, 1s. and 1s/4d, Saturday until 2. The rubber seating, I am informed, gives the Forum the distinction of being the first cinema theatre in the world to have this feature.

Designed in three different shades of rose, the plush coverings on the seats blend with the carpets. As befits the cinema's name, the frescoes are in gold relief depicting Roman characters reminiscent of the Forum in Rome. I was impressed with the concealed lighting under the circle. This gives a diffused effect very pleasing to the eye. Patrons should find, as I did, the seats exceptionally comfortable with ample legroom. Each seat provides an uninterrupted view of the screen.

The theatre will have floor ventilation operated by subterranean channels. Heating chambers are also fixed in the floor. On either side of the proscenium are small balconies, which will contain playing fountains. They will be fitted with interchangeable lighting. The café and dance hall over the entrance foyer is splendidly appointed and will be served by two kitchens. Patrons and members of the general public will be able to dance on a sprung floor. Standing at the top of the circle, I was struck by the great height and width of the building. The circle, incidentally, is divided into two sections, the front being 'fed' by two entrances on either side and the back by one main entrance.

The projection room proved one of the most interesting parts of the building. A Western Electric Wide Range Sound System is to be employed and two of the latest type water-cooled projectors have been installed. There will be microphones on the stage for the artistes and the organist will also have a microphone. In addition special speakers will play music whilst the safety curtain is down. Nearby is the rewinding room where the films are kept in fireproof receptacles and a workroom for the operators.

On the way to the stage I caught a glimpse of the free car park, which can accommodate 300 cars. The great feature of the stage is that everything can be flown, including the two screens. The main screen is of the latest Westone type and by means of the Wide Range System the sound will be evenly distributed throughout the house without distortion. I understand that although the second is also a talkie

screen it will mainly be used for showing slides whilst the stage is being set. The main screen is perforated and of a special texture. Completing the stage equipment are a scene dock at the side, a safety curtain and tableau curtains for stage and screen.

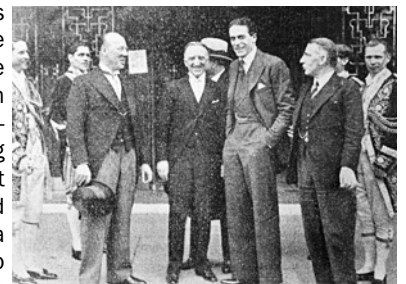
That the directors have the musical entertainment of their future patrons at heart is evidenced by the installation of a Compton Organ, fitted with the latest model illuminated console, one of the first of its kind to be installed in a London theatre. This instrument embodies all the tone colour of a symphony orchestra, all the majesty of a grand organ and all the verve and rhythm of a modern dance band. In addition it has a new feature, a string toned stop controlling a solo cello, which stands apart from the rest of the organ yet blends unobtrusively with the general tonal scheme of the instrument. This new solo cello is the newest and one of the most remarkable achievements of the Compton designers and will serve to make the organ more than ever a leading feature of the entertainment. The illuminated console with its continual change of beautiful colours is of a novel and ingenious design.

Before leaving the theatre I was able to have a chat with Mr Herbert A Yapp, the managing director. "The sorbo rubber underlying the carpet," he said, "is more costly than the carpet itself, which is the best that money can buy. My policy will be to show, after the first week, two of the latest film releases with stage presentations and organ interludes." Children will be admitted to any part of the house during matinées, if accompanied by an adult. No seats can be reserved. After the opening day, the performances will be continuous from 1pm. In the afternoon patrons, paying no more than 7d will be able to see a programme of over three hours duration with the additional benefits of a free car park and free cloakroom.

The café will be open daily from 11am to 10:30pm. Mr Victor Collingridge is the general manager and Mr L Pepper the resident manager. What should prove another popular appointment is that of Mr RR Holcrow as solo organist. He resumes his association with Mr Yapp, having been solo pianist for him at the Wandsworth Palace, afterwards taking up the position of orchestral organist when a Compton Organ was installed.

OPENING PROGRAMME.

When Mr Buchanan performs the opening ceremony at the Forum on Monday he will be heralded by a fanfare from four trumpeter of HM Grenadier Guards, who are coming from Windsor Castle. The visit of the famous stage and screen star will form part of a very full day, for in addition to appearing in Mr Whittington at the London Hippodrome, he is at present busy on a new film



Dignitaries at the opening ceremony; Jack Buchanan is second from right

production. Mr Robert Naylor, the celebrated English tenor, will render the National Anthem at the ceremony. He will soon be seen again at the Forum as the management are presenting him together with Miss Sylvia Cecil, as a stage attraction in the near future. Ranging in characterisation from the hostess of a homely little inn *Down Chelsea Way* to the glitter of a society debutante, Gracie Fields' latest picture *Love, Life and Laughter*, which will be shown all the week, affords the imitable comedienne unprecedented opportunity of which she takes full advantage.

Debroy Somers and his band will be appearing throughout the opening week on the stage and those who have had the pleasure of hearing this famous band, either on the wireless, on records or in British Screen Productions, will welcome the opportunity of seeing them in person. Pattman, one of the pioneers of present day organists will be at the organ on the opening day. He will appear by permission of Morden Cinema.

Sent in by David A Ellis



DECAYING MONUMENTS TO A GOLDEN AGE

By Mike Whitcombe

For centuries the only route into Portsmouth, the famous south coast naval City covering Portsea Island, was a well-trod way called London Road. This vital artery entered Portsea Island at Portsbridge Creek before heading south for four miles towards the famous naval dockyard in the south west area of the island. Until the late Victorian era, the first half of this route cut through open fields until reaching a district called North End, which, as the name suggests, was at the northern tip of what was then considered the town of Portsmouth. By the outbreak of World War Two, around fifty years later, Portsmouth was officially a City, having expanded considerably northwards, spilling off Portsea Island and swallowing several former villages to form the large urban sprawl we know today.

During the 1920s, the section of London Road that stretches south from North End was a popular shopping strip. As it weaved through neighbouring districts such as Kingston and Fratton, large chain stores including the Co-op, Marks & Spencer and Woolworth, as well as local independent retailers selling everything a housewife could want, tightly packed the route. Bordered on both sides by thousands of terraced houses with a public house on virtually every corner, it didn't take long before cinemas realised the potential of London Road and began springing up at an alarming rate. Many of these cinemas boasted capacities around the two thousand mark and were within view of each other. By the end of the 1930s, within a one and a half mile stretch of London Road, there were seven cinemas, four of which still remain standing today. Sadly, only one of these is still partially occupied. The others are derelict and in various states of decay. Yet a dozen years ago all these sites were playing an important role in the community with one of them even operating as a cinema still.



The former Odeon Portsmouth in March 2020



The Odeon in May 2006

That cinema was the four-screen Odeon at the northern tip of North End. Designed by Andrew Mather and built by Odeon at a cost of £36,997, it opened on 14 December 1936 with seating for 1,824 (1,224 in the stalls and 600 in the circle) and a huge car park at the rear. From the opening night, when *Chick* starring Sydney Howard was the first presentation, this particular Odeon was always a money-maker, explaining why it was converted for 70mm in September 1960 and tripled in August 1973. The former circle, which was otherwise left unaltered, housed screen ① while screens ② and ③ were built at the rear of the stalls. In 1990 a fourth screen opened at the front of the old stalls, where the bottom half of the original proscenium framed the screen. In 1998 the site received a £500,000 refurbishment. Many staff put such investment down to the romantic belief that as the cinema was situated just fifteen miles from the country estate of the Rank family; it was the Odeon of choice for the owners of the company. There's sadly no hard proof for this story but it's an appealing myth!

The Odeon finally closed on 10 January 2008. Until the final night, the cinema was well-maintained and still in profit. It closed because Odeon was then owned by Terra Firma, a venture capitalist group, who were doing their best to make a quick buck by selling a large number of the original high street Odeons. After buying UCI and merging them with Odeon, Terra Firma had the perfect excuse to close the Odeon North End as a former six -screen UCI was just four miles north at Port Solent. It took Terra Firma two years to offload the lease, which ran until 2035. Staff, who had been given their redundancy notices in 2006, were told the closing date just a few days before the final night.



The auditoria have remained empty ever since (and are in a terrible state if you check out photos by Urban Explorers) while the car park, which could accommodate over a hundred cars with ease, is now overgrown by scrub and littered with trash. The long entrance foyer, though, did house OJ's Discount store and then a Sainsbury's Local (see photo in the beautifully photographed *Odeon Relics* by Philip Butler) before that shut in 2019, finally leaving the entire cinema tragically deserted. The floor of this foyer contained the word Odeon that was cracked when a bomb dropped nearby during an air raid in 1941, causing the cinema to close for six weeks of repair. The remarkable thing about this fact is that the Odeon, along with other nearby cinemas, didn't suffer more damage as between July 1940 and May 1944 the City was hit by 67 Luftwaffe raids that killed 930, wounded over 3,000, destroyed 6,625 homes and severely damaged a further 6,549.



The former Majestic Portsmouth in March 2020



The Majestic in May 2006

A couple of hundred yards further south, just past Kingston Crescent where London Road merges seamlessly into Kingston Road, lies the former Majestic. It was designed in a Neo-Classical style with a capacity of 1,286 (816 in the stalls, 470 in the circle) by local architect AE Cogswell and opened on 5 December 1921. The opening film was the Fox presentation *A Yankee in the Court of King Arthur* starring Harry Myers (who directed 54 films between 1913-17 and acted in 330 movies between 1903-30), his real-life wife Rosemary Theby (who appeared in 250 films between 1911-40) and screen siren Pauline Stark. The Majestic was owned and built by local builder Richard Grant Stokes, who claimed he spent £50,000 doing so. Stokes was a hands-on boss and allegedly chose what films the cinema showed until his death in 1934 at the age of 74.

In 1949 the cinema was sold to the **Essoldo** chain who ran it until April 1972 when it passed into the ownership of London-based **Classic Cinemas Ltd**, who renamed it the **New Classic Cinema**. The name change did little good and the grand old lady of Kingston Road closed as a cinema in April 1974. It reopened in September 1976 as the 'Majestic Billiard and Snooker Club' and a snooker club under the name **S2 Snooker Club** still operates in part of the former stalls today. It boasts a snooker and pools area, a darts area, a lounge that serves cocktails and five private function rooms that can host between eight to fifty people. It currently closes at 11pm. Two years ago it didn't close until 4am but anti-social behaviour (fighting and drug dealing, according to the police) led to the licence being revoked. The rest of the ornately decorated building is vacant after several enterprises, from bars to gyms, have tried but failed to make a success of the building. In the past twelve months the building's front façade has deteriorated considerably and almost a Century after opening it's upsetting to see it looking so unloved.



The former Shaftesbury Portsmouth in March 2020



The Shaftesbury in May 2006

May 1910. It had originally been the **Buckland Congregational Church**, built in the 1880s and the transformation into a 1,114 capacity cinema, complete with a statue of **Mercury** sitting atop of the building, cost £8,000. In 1959 the cinema became the first in Portsmouth to be converted into a bingo hall. In 1969 the former circle was turned into a 220-seat cinema screen. Mecca took the hall over in April 1974 and a year later they closed the circle cinema. Rumours always abounded locally that the seats and projectors were never removed and that they were just waiting for somebody to reopen it.

The **Shaftesbury** closed in 2018. In June 2019 the building was put up for sale with residential development already approved for the site. The foyer and front façade of the building, though, must be retained and incorporated into the design with the foyer operating as a retail unit. Whether this actually becomes reality remains to be seen.

A few hundred yards further south, in view of the **Majestic**, sits the deserted **Shaftesbury**. It closed as a bingo club just two years ago but during its bingo years it was hugely popular among locals and always well-maintained. In fact, if you glanced casually at it today when passing, you could be forgiven for thinking it was still open for business. The **Shaftesbury Cinema** opened in



The former Troxy Portsmouth in March 2020



The Troxy in May 2006

A five minute stroll south leads to the district of **Fratton** and the former **Troxy** cinema. Set back from the road, this red brick faced building that cost £50,000 to build was always regarded as one of Portsmouth's super cinemas. Designed by **Robert Cromie**, it opened on 30 July 1936 with *Queen of Hearts* starring **Gracie Fields**. It had a 2,000 capacity

(1,500 in the stalls, 500 in the circle) and was operated by **Tivoli (Portsmouth) Ltd**. The proscenium was 40 feet wide and there were five dressing rooms serving a stage 35 feet deep. In 1941 the Government closed the cinema, turning it into a food store. It finally reopened on 30 September 1946 with *Anchors Aweigh* starring **Frank Sinatra** and **Gene Kelly**. In November 1950 the **Troxy** was acquired by the **Essoldo** chain. On 6 December 1953 the **Troxy** premiered *Bwana Devil*, starring **Robert Stack** and based on the true story of the **Tsavo Maneaters** (which also formed the basis for the 1996 movie *The Ghost and the Darkness*.) Filmed in **Natural Vision 3D**, *Bwana Devil* received mixed reviews but attracted huge crowds, who were keen to see the first feature length 3D film in colour and the first 3D film in English. The famous tag line for the film was 'A Lion in your lap' [See p2]. Two months later in February 1954 the **Troxy** became the first cinema in Portsmouth to be equipped with **CinemaScope** and stereo-phonetic sound, when it showed *The Robe*. For such a grand cinema, it closed as early as June 1960 (or June 1963 according to other sources) and was converted into the **Essoldo Bingo Club** before becoming a **Top Rank Bingo** club. When this closed in the 1993, the **Troxy** was converted to retail. **United Footwear** used the stalls area for many years until they closed a couple of years ago. Their conversion amounted to levelling the sloping stalls floor. Everything else, including the circle and the decoration on the side walls, was left untouched and the building still gave the impression of being a cinema. It was the only shoe store I didn't need to be persuaded to visit. Just like the **Majestic**, the **Troxy** has deteriorated greatly in the past twelve months.

The fact that four former picture palaces in a tired-looking mile and a half stretch of road should be left to decay in such a brazen fashion is nothing less than a disgrace and somebody in authority should certainly feel ashamed. **Portsea Island**, on which **Portsmouth** sits, is only nine square miles but it's home to over 200,000 people, making it the only City in England that has a population density greater than **London**. With space at such a premium, none of these once beautiful cinemas should be standing empty. Until a few years ago, all these sites were serving the community in a positive manner. Now they stand as relics to a golden age of cinema building that instead of being ignored, should be recognised and embraced. In a City ravaged by German bombs and some terrible post-war planning decisions that destroyed so many historic buildings, all four former cinemas should be kept standing and incorporated into a rejuvenation scheme that this particular stretch of famous old road so desperately needs.

2020 photos by the author; 2006 photos by **Harry Rigby**

MISCELLANY

LIONS' SHARE



The Criterion in Hull (East Yorks) opened as the Majestic in 1915 and closed in June 1969. Before it was demolished, two stone lions flanking the entrance were rescued and are now in Hornsea Memorial Gardens. {50144}

Hull Daily Mail (Nostalgia) – 30 March

IS THIS A DIGGER I SEE BEFORE ME?

Archaeologists believe they have uncovered the remains of the oldest theatre in the UK at a building site in Whitechapel in London's East End. The Red Lion is thought to have been built in 1567 when travelling actors toured Elizabethan Inns. The stage measured 40ft by 30ft and was raised 5ft above the ground.

Daily Mail – 10 June; sent in by Tom Laughlan

IT NEVER HAPPENED IN LUTON

William Southan Morris had parted company with Union Cinemas in the 1930s and bought a cinema called the Luxor in Hemel Hempstead. He had plans approved by the Council for a 1,000-seat cinema in Marsh Road in Luton, also to be called the Luxor – but it was never built. A sign in Waller Street also announced a new cinema, to be called the Waverley but that never materialised either. On the other side of town, at Stopsley, a board described a piece of land as a "site for a new cinema and temperance billiard hall" but this enterprise also came to nothing.

Luton News – 13 May; sent in by Margaret Burgoiné

Editor's Note: We carried a story on p8 of Bulletin 33/3 [May/June 1999] about a cinema called the Comet in Hartlepool that was built but never opened. I think I can recall another in Chester that was built but never opened. I cannot recall reporting in the Bulletin on any that were advertised but never built. Do any members know of other cinemas in either of these categories?

TOONS LOSE THEIR GUNS

Cartoon makers have stripped Bugs Bunny's enemies of their firearms in response to gun violence in the US. Producers of 200 new episodes of *Looney Tunes* have adapted the original series, which ran from 1930 to 1969, to appeal to younger audiences and cater to modern sensibilities. While rifles and pistols have been scrapped, Elmer Fudd and Yosemite Sam will continue to use explosives and a scythe as they hunt Bugs Bunny. Repeats of the original cartoons were edited in later days to remove some violence and scenes of smoking and drinking as well as references seen as guilty of racial stereotyping.

Daily Mail – 9 June; sent in by Tom Laughlan



DRIVE-IN



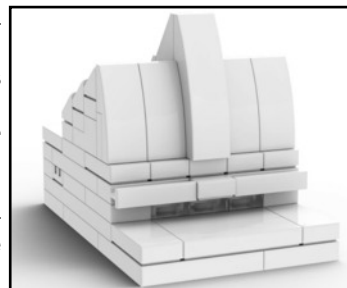
In the light of the current pandemic, drive-in cinemas have been appearing up and down the country. Here are two adverts, one is £35 per car and the other charges £40 per car and two occupants, with additional passengers extra.

Sent in by Allen Eyles

BUILD YOUR OWN ESSOLDO

We have featured before the website of the Longford / Essoldo in Stretford, Manchester. Now it has a link to a site where for £2 you can download plans from *The Modernist* magazine to build a model of the cinema from Lego. There are also suggestions for alternatives if you don't have enough bricks.

[longfordcinema.co.uk]



SPARTACUS GOLDEN GLOBE

The Golden Globe won in 1961 by Edward Lewis, the producer of *Spartacus*, is to be up for auction, after he died last July, aged 99. In hiring blacklisted writer Dalton Trumbo to pen the screenplay, producers Edward Lewis and Kirk Douglas (who also played the title role) were instrumental in ending the Hollywood blacklist of show-business professionals suspected of having communist sympathies. Despite having five nominations, this is the only award the picture received. Auctioneer Bonhams was expecting offers of up to £12,000 but it finally sold for US\$11,950 (£9,694).

Daily Express – 13 June; sent in by Barry Quinton



FILM HAT'S GOLD FIGURE

A battered bowler hat from the James Bond film *Goldfinger* has been valued at £30,000. It was part of a collection of 007 memorabilia brought to the *Antiques Roadshow* when it was filmed at the National Botanic Garden of Wales last summer. The programme, which was transmitted in May, revealed that a similar hat sold for £60,000 in London after being touted as the only one of its kind. However the *Roadshow* expert said he suspected there was more than one made for the filming. The man who brought it in explained that his brother-in-law was Sean Connery's driver and he asked the studio if he could have one of the hats. The studio insisted the metal rim was taken out before it left the premises.

The Sun, Daily Mirror – 4 May; sent in by Barry Quinton

COVID-19 UPDATE

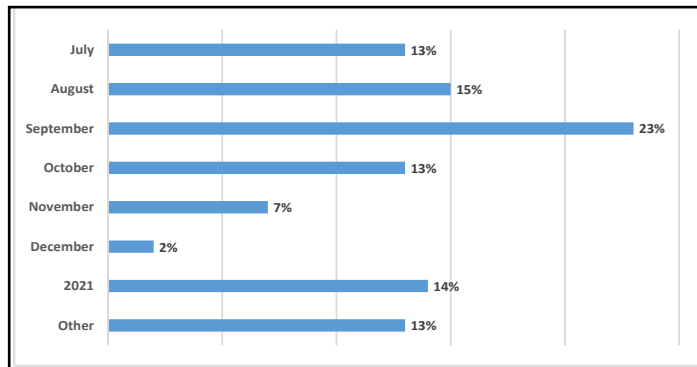
HOW AND WHEN WILL CINEMAS REOPEN IN ENGLAND

The government has confirmed that cinemas in England can reopen from 4 July, although many will not be ready to do so by that date.

Of the UK's main cinema chains:

- ♦ Showcase – nine cinemas on 4 July and eight more on 10 July
- ♦ Odeon – ten cinemas from 4 July, then a further 88 over the subsequent two weeks
- ♦ Everyman – six branches on 4 July, with the other 27 after that
- ♦ Cineworld – all open on 10 July ¹
- ♦ Vue – from 10 July
- ♦ Picturehouse – from 10 July
- ♦ Curzon – Canterbury on 17 July, Mayfair on 24 July and most of the other eleven on 31 July
- ♦ Empire – TBC

Many independent cinemas are choosing to wait longer. In a survey by the Independent Cinema Office, 13% of venues said they would be back in July, with 15% reopening in August and a further 23% in September.



Details of reopenings in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have yet to be announced by the respective governments.

Guidelines published by the UK Cinema Association [in a 30 page document] and approved by the government include:

- ♦ Socially distanced seating, with people from different households sitting apart and with a limited capacity in each screen
- ♦ Staggered start and finished times to avoid congestion in foyers
- ♦ Hand sanitisers, extra cleaning, staff training and plastic screens at tills and kiosks
- ♦ Encouraging people to use online booking, e-ticketing and contactless payment where possible
- ♦ Pick 'n' mix stands to be removed and people encouraged to pre-order popcorn
- ♦ No sing-along screenings

Showcase, which has released the greatest detail, said it would encourage customers to use face masks, although a safety video suggests people can remove them once they have taken their seats. The chain also promised that an 'anti-viral fogging machine' will be used on every seat between every screening and each auditorium will have an air purifying system. People will be able to order popcorn and snacks in advance and scan their own tickets to gain entry.

Cinemas that are open in early- and mid-July will start by showing classic films like *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back* and *Inception* and movies that were in cinemas before they shut, like *Onward* and *1917*. Cinemas have been given access to an archive of 450 films to choose from while the schedule of new releases ramps up.

BBC News website - 31 May, 26 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock & Martin Tapsell

Editor's Note: That was the situation when this Bulletin went to press on 30 June. Things will probably have changed by the time you read this.

HERE COMES THE BRIDE

The City Mayor married Janine and Philip Scholz at a drive-in cinema in Düsseldorf [Germany], as guests looked on from their cars. The bride had to walk through taped-off lanes to ensure social distancing.

Daily Telegraph - 6 May; sent in by Martin Tapsell

¹ **Late News:** Cineworld has put the date back to 31 July.

Sky News - 30 June; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

SOCIAL DISTANCE THEATRE



The Berliner Ensemble, a theatre in Berlin founded in 1949 by actress Helene Weigel and her husband, playwright Bertold Brecht, has released pictures of its stripped-down interior, where most chairs have been ripped out to ensure social distancing. The new layout sees 200 seats instead of the previous 700, ensuring the German government requirements of at least 1.5 meters of safety distance. As intervals have been suppressed, the audience can go to the toilet whenever they want in order to avoid congestions at these closed spaces. The theatre has also said that it will keep a three-meter distance between the stage and the first row while some doors will be kept open to ensure the air keeps circulating. Some plays have been postponed because of the amount of actors on stage at the same time while others, like *Macbeth*, have been taken out of the repertoire as it involves acts of kissing.

Designboom - 4 June

SOCIAL DISTANCE CINEMA

The Film Theatre in Leiston (Suffolk) has been closed since March for he first time in its 105-year history. Manager Wayne Burns, the only full-time member of staff, has been preparing for the reopening on his own since then, as the other eleven part-time staff were furloughed. Under social distancing guidelines only 60 of the 253 seats will be used - see plan [R], popcorn will only be available in bags, ticket stubs will not be torn and there will be one entrance for pre-booked tickets and another for the box office. Wayne has written a book called *Spilling the Popcorn*



on the history of the theatre, ISBN 1907938591. There is also a good history on the *East Anglian Daily Times* website at: [tinyurl.com/ybgbkjyz].

ALTERNATIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Most circuit web pages contain a "closed for now" message but a chance look at the Scott cinemas website [scottcinemas.co.uk] shows that they offer a range of free short films for home viewing. The choice includes some where adult supervision is advised but there are also a few cinema-related home games and a recipe to make the ice cream you are missing.

Sent in by Martin Tapsell

THE SHOW MUST GO ON

Cinemas and theatres in Scotland could be used as courtrooms to let juries sit on criminal trials during the Covid-19 outbreak. The proposal emerged after a furious backlash at emergency plans to suspend the centuries-old legal principle in serious court cases.

Daily Record - 2 April; sent in by Tom Laughlan

BUY A TICKET FOR A NHS WORKER

The Dome cinema in Worthing (West Sussex) has launched a scheme where you can buy a cinema ticket for a NHS worker. The donor will also get a 'thank you' discount on their ticket. [domecinema.co.uk]

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]

ASHBOURNE (Derbys)



Plans have been unveiled to restore the former **Elite**. The current blueprint would involve extending each of the existing tiers to accommodate larger, more luxurious seats and extending the seating area out to create 144 seats overall. The downstairs is a shopping arcade. {29267}

Derby Telegraph – 4 June; photo taken July 2011

ASHFORD (Kent)

The Covid-19 pandemic has left a £4.5m gap in the Council's finances. This means a number of projects are on hold, including plans to demolish the former **Odeon**. Whilst the delay in demolishing the former cinema may offer a glimmer of light for local campaigners against the redevelopment, the pause seems temporary. Listing was refused in 2019. {14785}

Bingo Daily – 29 May

AYR

Plans have been unveiled to convert the abandoned **Darlington** church into Ayr's answer to the GFT in Glasgow. The director of the Iris arts venue has secured £20,000 from South Ayrshire Council for the project. The 1860 building is on the Buildings At Risk register for Scotland.

Daily Record – 15 May

BACUP (Lancs)



The former **Regal** is to be restored and repurposed following the town being granted over £1m in funding. It opened in September 1931 with 960 seats and films ceased in the late 1960s in favour of bingo, which closed in the early 2000s.

Lancashire Live – 15 June; *Lancashire Telegraph* – 19 June; sent in by Philip Crompton; photo taken June 2005

BARNESLEY (South Yorks)

Like others, operator Rob Younger has been using the time whilst the Parkway is closed to do repairs and maintenance. Screen ① has been upgraded to Dolby 7.1 sound. Handrails that were painted over in Odeon days have been stripped and stained. Toilets have been reconditioned and the foyer and other areas have been repainted. Rob has been keeping a diary on the cinema's Facebook pages and says he will be glad when the cinema reopens so he can have a rest. {6208}

Parkway Cinema Facebook Pages

BARNSTAPLE (DEVON)

Scott Cinemas has submitted an application to convert the upper floors of the former BHS store inside the Green Lanes Shopping Centre into a seven-screen cinema. This would replace their existing four-screen operation (ex Gaumont/Odeon/Classic) in Boutport Street.

North Devon Journal – 23 April

BASILDON (Essex)

The former ABC/Robins cinema has been bought by the Council for £2.75m as part of a town centre transformation plan. It opened in September 1971 with two screens, seating 644 and 455 and closed in December 1999, unable to compete with a new UCI (now Cineworld) multiplex. The site stands next to the East Square development, which will include a ten-screen cinema. {24134}

Basildon Echo – 7 April; photo taken July 2007

BLACKPOOL (Lancs)

The **Empire Bingo Club** in Hawes Side Lane has announced that after closing due to the coronavirus lockdown it will not be reopening and an application to demolish the building has now been made. It is claimed the age of the building would make it too difficult to introduce the social distancing measures required while keeping the business viable. Two years ago planning permission was given to build 14 flats on the site.



The **Empire** opened as a cinema on 5 August 1929. It was then a small suburban cinema seating 840 but was later enlarged and upgraded by Blackpool architect Halstead Best. He extended the building to accommodate a new foyer with a new projection room above it. It reopened on 5 August 1939 with an increased seating capacity of 1,094 and a café on the first floor. It closed on 10 October 1959 and became the Sands Casino and Theatre Club with starring appearances by Tom Jones, Shirley Bassey, Freddie Starr and Bernard Manning among others. Jayne Mansfield played a week's cabaret there shortly before her death in 1967. It was converted into a bingo club by local operator Talbot Bingo opening in August 1974. The firm was run by John Bottomley but was taken over by his wife Elaine after he died in June 1990. {6547}

Sent in by Ray Dolling & Ken Roe; photo taken June 2009

Planning permission is being sought to redevelop part of the building that once housed the **Princess** cinema. The Electric Sunshine Project, set up in 2016 by Artistic Director Melanie Whitehead, wants to use the space for its workshops and projects aimed at providing opportunities for people currently least likely to connect with the arts. While community work would be central to the project, it is also hoped to generate income through ticketed shows and operating outlets selling food and merchandise. Since closing as a cinema in 1981 the premises has had a variety of uses, most recently a Bavarian Bier Keller and a nightclub 'Club Domain' together with partially completed high-end holiday apartments. {6550}

Blackpool Gazette – 7 May; sent in by Ray Dolling



BOURNEMOUTH

Plans to convert the former Odeon into 64 flats can go ahead after two previous applications failed. Previous plans for blocks containing 101 and then 84 flats had been rejected over concerns about their scale. But Council planning officers granted outline planning permission using delegated powers. They said the scheme was now “an acceptable intervention”.

Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 3 June; sent in by John R Forster

BRIDGWATER (Somerset)

Planning permission has been granted for a seven-screen cinema at Northgate. It will be operated by Scott Cinemas, who will vacate their current premises, the former Odeon. It is hoped construction will start soon and the new facilities will be in operation in 2021. See p 15 last Bulletin.

Bridgwater Mercury – 13 June

BRIDPORT (Dorset)

Permission is being asked for renovations and changes to the **Electric Palace** building, although the work is already underway. The work includes the restoration of the large roof lights, which have been reduced in size over the years. Also planned is a new roof covering on the leaking flat roof and rebuilding parts of the parapet wall on the roof. {22418}

Bridport & Lyme Regis News – 16 April

BRIERLEY HILL (Dudley)

A planning application has been submitted to convert the former **Danilo** into a church. On p15 of the last Bulletin we reported it had been put on the market. {37851}

Express & Star – 1 May; sent in by Ivan Harris

BRIGHTON

A grant of £7,000 has been awarded to Brighton Hippodrome Community Investment Company to support legal advice to formalise a partnership and support fundraising advice. It has plans to restore the grade II* listed theatre. {36884}

The Argus, Brighton – 21 May; sent in by Barry Quinton

BURTON-ON-TRENT (Staffs)



The ground floor of the Ritz is now up for let for £35,000 a year after remaining unoccupied since Purrociuous Cat Café closed down before Christmas. The first floor of the building remains as a successful events venue, which holds events including music nights and wedding receptions. The cinema opened in March 1935 and became a Gaumont in February 1957. It was renamed Odeon in November 1966 and was tripled in April 1974. It was leased to Robins cinemas in 1996 and closed in December 1999. It lay empty for fourteen years. {22126}

Derbyshire Live – 23 June; photo taken May 2004

BURY ST EDMUNDS (Suffolk)

Renovation works have been continuing during the lockdown at the **Abbeygate** cinema. The former bingo area is being converted into a new auditorium. The new screen frame is already in place and a 4K projection system will soon be installed. {24294}

East Anglian Daily Times – 24 April

CAMBRIDGE



Plans to redevelop the former Tivoli have been put on hold due to the Covid-19 crisis. The building suffered a major fire in March 2015. It opened in March 1925 with 570 seats and closed in November 1956. It was a warehouse for many years but became a pub in 2004, closed in 2008 and was taken over by Wetherspoons in 2010. {36849}

Cambridgeshire Live – 5 June; photo taken July 2004

CAVERSHAM (Reading)

Planning permission is being applied for to convert a gym into a three-screen cinema. One screen would seat 94 and the other two 77 each and would be above the Waitrose store and at the rear.

Henley Standard – 22 June

CHESTER

The **Storyhouse** (ex Odeon) is to convert its main 485-seat theatre into a cinema to run alongside its existing 100-seat cinema. Both will run at only 25% capacity with social distancing and one-way systems in place. A spokesman said there is “a very real threat it could be out of business by Christmas” due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. {2514}

BBC News website – 19 June

CHRISTCHURCH (Dorset)



While virtually every cinema and theatre has been mothballed over the last few months the **Regent** has been preparing for an overdue makeover. Luckily this well-supported and much-loved venue had built up enough reserves to schedule a major redecoration, re-seating and carpeting investment. Chairman Gary Trinder, who had overseen the transformation of The **Plaza Super Cinema** in Stockport when living in the north, is again getting to grips with the smaller but equally successful 1930s **Regent** on the South Coast.

Highly regarded seating specialists Kirwin and Simpson have been commissioned to make 502 traditional cinema-style seats with posturepedic foam for added comfort with a bespoke fabric. The seats standards will be of cast iron construction and made in the Midlands, as they would have been in 1931 when the **Regent** opened. A new Axminster carpet has been manufactured by Brinton's who were also around in the hey-day of cinema construction.

A huge scaffolding structure is under construction in the auditorium to allow the team of painters from BCP [Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole] Council, who tendered for the contract for the decoration. There will be a sympathetic colour scheme in metallic colours, a contrast from the present fifteen colour ways, most members will recall from the Mecca bingo palette. Careful management should bring the whole refurbishment in at a net cost under £300,000.

Although privately conceived, the Regent spent most of its life owned by Portsmouth Town Cinemas, before a brief spell under Shipman and King. When films ended in 1973, a near decade on bingo followed under Mecca. The current Board of Directors of the Regent and the enthusiastic new manager Mathew Vass-White, are carefully checking the Government guidelines and working on a plan to re-open the Regent at the best possible time for a relaunch. Certainly the Regent should be looking her best when inviting people back in her approaching ninetieth year. {24540}

Sent in by Philip Stevens & David Eve

CLEVEDON (North Somerset)



After having been stopped because of the pandemic, work has now restarted on repairing the roof of the Curzon. The work involves renewing the decaying timber on the top floor and all 12,380 terracotta tiles will be replaced. A further £30,000 needs to be raised to cover the costs. {846}

Bristol Post – 20 May; photo taken August 2003

COLCHESTER (Essex)

Light is to be the operator of a new multiplex to be built at the Tollgate Village Park. Work is set to begin later this year and opening is scheduled for the end of 2021. A rival Cineworld at the Northern Gateway development is due to be open by 2023. This will mean Colchester will have four cinemas, including the Odeon and Curzon in the town centre.

Daily Gazette – 10 March

We reported on p16 of the last Bulletin about a petition to save the former Odeon in Crouch Street. Now owner Blumarble has unveiled fresh proposals for 55 apartments and two retail units. Under these new plans, the existing building would be demolished completely with a replica of the foyer section reconstructed with “long lost features”. An artist’s impression can be seen on the newspaper website at [tinyurl.com/yb68ecrz]. Objections to the plans are “flooding in” including from the Theatres Trust. {17575}

Daily Gazette – 8, 26 May, 8 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock

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DAVENTRY (Northants)

The Council has granted an operating licence for the new four-screen Arc cinema, allowing it to open between 8am and 2am. Construction is continuing at the former library site as the contractor has implemented social distancing measures. It is too early to say whether the scheduled opening date of Easter 2021 will have to be put back.

Daventry Express – 30 April

EASTBOURNE (East Sussex)

The former Curzon, which closed last January, has been boarded-up by the Council to prevent anti-social behaviour. {24677}

Eastbourne Herald – 16 April

GIRVAN (Ayrshire)



The Council plans to buy the former Vogue for £80,000 and then demolish it. The cinema opened around 1933 with 1,070 seats. Films ceased in the late 1970s in favour of bingo, which had closed by the time this photo was taken in August 2009. The building has been empty since and is in a poor state of repair. {50825}

Daily Record – 30 April; photo taken August 2009

GLASGOW (Central)

The former ABC looks set to be demolished with the final objections against the proposal being removed. It was severely damaged in the second School of Art fire in 2018 and is now said to be overrun with vermin and sewage. {38564}

Glasgow Evening Times – 5 May

GLASGOW (Gorbals)

Plans, announced on p18 of Bulletin 54/2, for a seven-screen 600-seat cinema on Crown Street Retail Park have been approved by the Council. It will be made by amalgamating two former retail units. No operator or time-scale has been given.

Glasgow Evening Times – 14 May

GLASGOW (Govan)

Plans have been submitted to renovate the category B listed former Lyceum. The plans include a 500-seat cinema on the first floor and a concert hall and events space on the ground floor, together with a restaurant. The cinema opened in December 1938 and closed on bingo in October 2006. See p23 Bulletin 54/1. {15565}

Glasgow Evening Times – 1 May

GUILDFORD (Surrey)

Odeon has resubmitted revised plans to extend their nine-screen cinema into an adjacent restaurant building and add two additional 74-seat screens. Plans had originally been submitted in February but were later temporarily withdrawn in early April so that amendments could be made to the proposals.

The new application has reduced the number of Odeon signs on the outside of the building from three to two, as well as slightly altering the patterning to the proposed new front of the Old Orleans site. There will also be added LED lighting and the inclusion of illuminated poster cases to the outside of the building. There would also be additional toilets, disabled facilities and emergency routes to cater for the extended section of the cinema, while all of its current screens and facilities would be retained. See p 17 last Bulletin and p18 Bulletin 54/2.

Surrey Live – 7 May

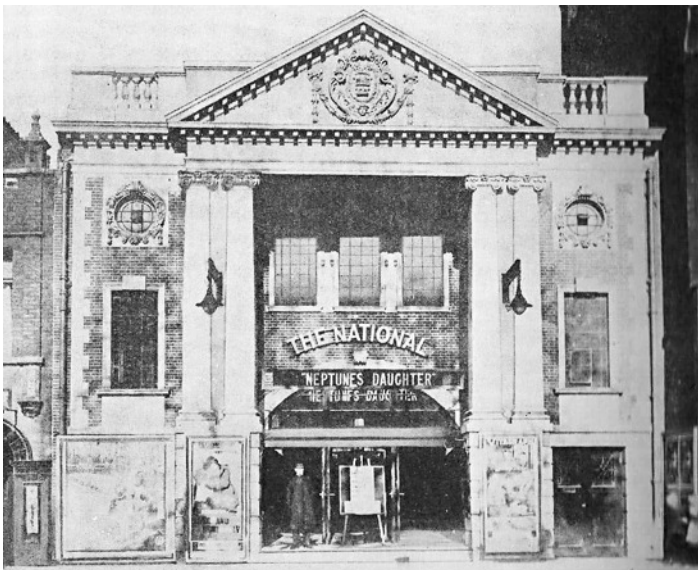
HUCKNALL (Notts)

Work has restarted at the ARC Byron. The cinema was a week away from completion when the order to close down came. It is planned that all works will be completed to allow the cinema to open on or after 4 July, government advice permitting. The building was gutted internally with two screens now in the former stalls and two in the circle, side by side. A new sales and ticket area has been built at the rear of the former stalls as the original entrance foyer is very small. The screens stop short of the old stage, which was a triangle shape to allow for the road to cut in on the right and this has been utilized as a fire exit. Sadly all former decorative plaster work had to be removed as it contained asbestos but the wooden forms of the original proscenium arch are still in place around the stage. When the flooring in the original foyer was pulled up it revealed the cinema name **BYRON** set out in the terrazzo flooring. Safety features have been put in place to ensure social distancing requirements. See p 17 last Bulletin. {13428}



Nottinghamshire Live – 11 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo on front cover; also sent in and additional material & photos by Ben Doman

HULL (East Yorks)



The Council has been given the green light to bid for almost £290,000 in Lottery funding to restore the National Picture Theatre and turn it into a memorial and museum covering the impact of war on civilian life. The deadline for the bid is September, with a National Lottery decision due by December. If approved, work will begin next spring. {40893}

Hull Daily Mail – 17 June; sent in by David Alexander

HUNTLY (Aberdeen)

Huntly's new community hub could include a café, cinema, bookshop and community gallery. The facilities will be housed in 30 The Square but extensive renovation work is required at the empty property before plans can progress. The Huntly and District Development Trust is applying for permission to restore both the outside and inside of the building, while preserving as much of its history as possible. For generations No 30 was an important business to the town and served as a hardware store under the family business Cruickshanks.

Press & Journal, Aberdeen – 21 May

KIRKBY-IN-ASHFIELD (Notts)

Plans to open a "state-of-the-art" leisure centre have taken a major step forward after the Council launched a bid to find a construction firm. Work is already underway to clear part of the Festival Hall site, which will eventually make way for the £14 million centre boasting swimming pools, a cinema, a gym and cafe. A full planning application was submitted in March.

Nottinghamshire Live – 4 June

LEAMINGTON SPA (Warks)

Plans for a cinema and gym in the building once occupied by House of Fraser in Leamington have been shelved by developers.

Coventry Live – 19 May

LIVERPOOL (Crosby)

The Plaza community cinema has raised almost £11,000 to help it reopen after being closed due to the pandemic. They aim to reopen on 17 July with safety measures in place. The two smaller screens are going to go from seating 92 to 44 and the big screen will go from 596 to 235. During the closure the seats in the big screen have been cleaned. {6527}

The Guide, Liverpool – 19 June

LONDON (Acton)

The nine-screen Vue at Royale Leisure Park will not be reopening after the current closure. It opened as the Warner in December 1994 and its lease was about to expire. It has been stripped out. {21132}

Sent in by Ken Roe

LONDON (Bethnal Green)



Demolition of the former Rex/Essoldo has begun. It opened as Smart's Picture House in April 1913 with 865 seats on a single floor. It was remodelled in 1938 by George Coles and reopened as the Rex. It became the Essoldo in December 1949 and films ceased in August 1964. It was converted into a bingo club, which operated until about 1990. The building was taken over by Frankle Trimmings, who renovated the façade. They vacated the building around 2015, after which the interior was gutted. In 2017 plans were announced to convert it into a hotel with a cinema but this never happened. It is not known what will happen to the site. {16512}

Sent in & photo by Andrew Woodyatt

Editor's Note: There are photos of the cinema as it once was – and many other cinemas too – on Charles Jenkins' website:

[www.eastend-memories.org]

LONDON (Clapham Junction)



The Grand opened in November 1900 as a 1,528-seat variety theatre. Films soon became part of the performance and from February 1931 it was a full-time cinema. Bingo took over in October 1963 until 1979. It was a music venue from 1991 to 1997 when it was bought by Wetherspoons. They were refused a licence and sold out to the Po Na Na Group, who since around 2001 has operated it as a concert venue and nightclub, with occasional films. Now they have launched an appeal to save the building as costs have risen during the pandemic with no income. The website contains history and memories and a link to the crowdfunding page. [claphamgrand.com/historyandmemories] {18326}

Sent in by Robert Holden; photo taken May 2013

LONDON (Dartford)

I have been viewing the detail of the ambitious mixed development planning app 20/00409/FUL. This includes a 2,792 m² cinema with a ground floor entrance adjacent to retail and escalator access to first and second floor levels. The cinema is in two adjacent buildings, linked by an enclosed walkway on both floors. At ground level there is a passage between the two halves of the cinema. The building will be of red brick in keeping with the heritage around Spital Street, with the south end using detailed brickwork and horizontal banding to provide articulation.

Sent in by Martin Tapsell

LONDON (East Ham)



Permission has been granted to demolish the Boleyn (ex Odeon) and build shops and flats. The cinema opened as an Odeon in July 1938 with 2,212 seats and closed in October 1981. After lying empty for 14 years it was reopened as the Boleyn, a Bollywood cinema with three screens. In 2014/15 the two downstairs screens were converted into a banqueting hall and the original circle was split into two screens. It closed at the start of the current pandemic. {14651}

Newham Recorder – 29 April; photo taken April 2006

LONDON (Kensington)

Squire and Partners looks likely to win approval for its re-jigged design for the Odeon Kensington site more than a decade after its first application for the plot. In 2016 they received permission for a development comprising buildings of between three and eight storeys, which retained a cinema and kept the façade from the original Kensington Odeon. Now, the practice is expected to get permission for a revised version of that scheme, which provides a six-screen cinema, more office and shop space and increases the number of homes from 40 to 106, including neighbouring sites.

Architects' Journal – 14 May

LONDON (Walthamstow)

The redevelopment of the former Granada/EMD cinema on Hoe Street was granted unanimous planning permission at a virtual Council meeting. Waltham Forest Council plans to spend a total of £25 million transforming the disused Grade II-listed cinema into a theatre and entertainment venue. Local residents have expressed concern about the height of a proposed stage extension.

Waltham Forest Guardian – 3 June

LONDON (West End)

Plans have been approved for a major refurbishment of the Grade II listed Empire (ex Carlton) on Haymarket. The plans include the reinstatement of the original entrance design and improvements to accessibility. Internal alterations will include the conversion of two existing auditoria in the basement into four smaller auditoria, an upgrade to seating in the main auditorium as well as a refurbishment of the basement bar and toilets. {1838}

The Stage – 29 April, 7 May; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

Part of the Trocadero entertainment complex by Piccadilly Circus could become a mosque. It would be housed in the grade II-listed building's two underground levels, which were used as a cinema until 2006. A planning application for the mosque was submitted in February by an Islamic education charity. As of 20 May, more than 830 people had written to object or voice support for the plans.

My London – 21 May



Trafalgar Studios has been given permission to convert its two performance spaces into a single 630-seat auditorium. This will revert the building, formerly called the Whitehall Theatre back to its original configuration before it was split in 2004. The art deco style of the theatre will be restored. photo taken February 2007

The Stage – 7 May; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

LUTON (Beds)

Work has started on the flats and the couple of shops planned for the site of the former Ritz. There is a planning application in with the Council to reduce the size of the two shops and add extra flats due to the current situation with the demise of retail in town centres. {6247}

Sent in & photo by Margaret Burgoine



MARLBOROUGH (Wilts)

Detailed plans have been submitted to convert a Grade II listed former chapel in The Parade into a 120-seat cinema. Problems with rotting joists have delayed the application. The plans are expected to be rubber stamped. Subject to final approval, spades could be in the ground as early as August with tenders for the work going out for local businesses in June.

Wiltshire Times – 26 May

MARYPORT (Cumbria)



A £14m plan to rejuvenate the town has been put forward. The proposals include turning the former Carlton into an events and co-working space; the building was last used for retail but is currently empty. Also mentioned is a community cinema at Empire Yard. {46126}

North West Place – 7 June; photo taken February 2007

NOTTINGHAM

Approval has been given to replace the former Queens with a nine-storey apartment block. The cinema first opened in April 1909 on a corner site with the main entrance on Arkwright Street and the side of the auditorium [pictured] on Queen's Road. It closed suddenly on Tuesday 4 January 1955 with the rest of the week's run being cancelled. The auditorium was used as a car showroom for a while and the foyer became a retail unit; both are currently vacant. The local Civic Society has criticised the height of the development.

Nottingham Post – 5 May; sent in by Terry Hanstock & Ken Roe; photo top next column

RINGWOOD (Hants)

A new scheme has been launched to save the Regal. They have released a video about their campaign. [youtu.be/umuKFGWyg10] {28134}

Southern Daily Echo – 12 June; Sent in by John R Forster & Philip Stevens



The former Queens in Nottingham

ROTHERHAM (South Yorks)

Planning permission has been granted for an eight-screen cinema at Forge Island. No operator has been named. It is anticipated that construction will begin in autumn 2021.

Rotherham Business News – 19 June; also sent in by Terry Hanstock

SHEFFIELD

The bar that operates in the basement of the Grade II listed Abbeydale has applied to extend its opening hours until 3am. It says that it has operated successfully for a number of years and because it is underground there is very little noise pollution. There is a need to increase revenues once lockdown restrictions are lifted.

Yorkshire Post – 2 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock



The four-screen Showroom cinema will remain closed until at least September. The 1930s building was not designed as a cinema and it has not been easy to implement social distancing measures. {25310}

Sheffield Star – 18 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken February 2005

The 1987 two-screen Odeon is to be converted into a hotel and mixed-leisure complex. The steel frame of the building will be retained. The cinema was built on the site of the former Gaumont but only had a life of seven years before being superseded by a seven-screen Odeon elsewhere in the City Centre. The old Odeon became a nightclub. {50354}

The Star, Sheffield – 24 April; Construction Enquirer – 11 May; sent in by Terry Hanstock

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The former Palace in Wincobank is on the market with a price tag of £199,000. The building dates from 1914 and originally had 500 seats but in about 1926 a balcony was added, increasing the capacity by 100. Films ceased in 1960 and the building was last used as a plumbers' merchants. It is understood the mosaic tiled floor is intact. {48380}

The Star, Sheffield – 2 May; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo on front cover

SKELMERSDALE (Lancs)

Star Cinemas, which operates screens in California and Arizona plans to deliver an affordable cinema on the ground floor of the Concourse Shopping Centre. When it opens, it will be the first cinema in Skelmersdale since 1982.

The Champion – May

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA (Essex)

The Kursaal may lay empty for some time following the news that the Rendezvous Casino is to close. The building is owned by the Council but leased to a private company. It sits opposite a site earmarked for the proposed £50m Seaway cinema and leisure scheme and its fate may depend on whether the scheme goes ahead. The building dates from 1902 and became a cinema in 1913. It closed during WWI and reopened from 1920 to 1940. {43286}

Southend Echo – 18 June

ST IVES (Cornwall)



The former Palace has been listed Grade II. It appears to be a conversion of a dance hall but closed in 1939 when the Royal cinema opened. In 1961 it was bought by Wakefield-born sculptor Dame Barbara Hepworth and used as her studio, where she created many of her famous works. The announcement came on the 45th anniversary of her death in 1975, aged 72.

BBC News website – 18 May; Historic England Press Release – 23 May; sent in by Jeremy Buck, Margaret Burgoine & John West; photo taken June 2008

STOCKTON-ON-TEES



The former Odeon was demolished in early June. It opened in April 1968 with 1,225 seats on a stadium level. It was equipped for 70mm. It was a replacement for the 1935 Odeon and built on the same site. It closed in October 1981 and was last used as a nightclub, which closed in 2013. {14274}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken June 2006

REWINDING BACK

Sent in by David A Ellis

Crime and Courts

CREWE BURGLARY



The Palace Crewe in August 2007

During Tuesday night the **Palace** cinema Edleston Road, Crewe, was broken into and the office safe rifled of its contents to the extent of about fifty pounds. The discovery was made on Wednesday morning when two cleaners who had gone on the premises to carry out their usual duties found the office door open and the safe missing. A search revealed the safe in the ladies' lavatory, where it had apparently been moved before being tampered with. It was found that the back had been taken out, a chisel and a screwdriver which were left behind, indicating the manner in which this had been accomplished. An entrance to the building had evidently been effected by the window in the ladies' lavatory, which had been smashed. The intruders had missed a bag in the office containing notes. The local police have the matter in hand.

Crewe Chronicle – 5 January 1924

THE OPEN DOOR

At Acton, on Monday, Thomas Moore (20), a labourer, of no fixed abode was charged as a suspected person, being found in the **Coliseum** cinema, High Road, Chiswick, for an unlawful purpose. PC 283T said that he was called to the cinema and found accused sitting down inside. When asked to account for his being there, he said, "I found the door open and I came in here to sleep." He was taken to the station and when charged made no reply. The accused denied that he went to the place for an unlawful purpose. A remand was ordered, bail being fixed.

Acton Gazette – 21 June 1929

DISPUTE OVER CINEMA SEATING

In the King's Bench Division on Wednesday 24 June, Mr Justice McCordie concluded the hearing of the case in which EA Langrish & Co Ltd of Wardour Street W1 claimed from John Kay of Oxford Street London, balance on bills given by the defendant in payment for 1,537 seats for the **Regent** cinema, Becontree, Essex. Defendant counter-claimed for £768 for breach of contract, alleging that, contrary to sample, seats supplied made a loud noise in tip-up, which interfered with the audience's quiet enjoyment of the 'talkies'. Defendant further said the seats were not satisfactorily counterweighted, that the springs were not up to the sample. Further, defendant complained that the seats failed to comply with the regulations of the Essex County Council. The defendant said he had paid Messers Hamptons 9s/10d each for seats which they had treated with upholstery and mechanism, supplying them with 'silencers'.

His Lordship, interrupting counsel who opened the counter-claim. Said that if the seats, when a member of the audience arose, fell back with a "bang" they made in Court, he agreed it would destroy the pleasure with which one heard and saw the performance. Plaintiffs, in reply to defendant's counter-claim, denied that there had been a breach of contract and said certain alterations were carried out on the suggestion of the defendants. His Lordship, after hearing the evidence, which extended over several days, found for the plaintiffs for £1,277 credit to

be given by plaintiffs for £508 taken by them out of court and they were to have the general costs. In regard to the counter-claim, his Lordship awarded the defendants £310 with half the costs.

The Bioscope – 1 July 1931

BURGLARY AT ACTON

Police are investigating a burglary that was carried out at the **Rex** cinema, Horn Lane, Acton on Friday night. Thieves gained entrance to the building by way of the roof and forced open the door of the manager's office. The day's takings had previously been banked and the intruders were only successful in obtaining some small silver and coppers. This evidently incensed them and they broke several doors in the cinema and damaged furniture.



Acton Gazette – 12 May 1939

VANDALISM AT ACTON



The Dominion (later Granada) Acton in March 2019

The screen at the **Dominion** cinema Acton was slashed and fire buckets were emptied on the carpets during the night on Thursday last week. The damage was discovered when the cinema was opened on Friday morning. No attempt had apparently been made to enter the manager's office and there were no signs that the doors of the cinema had been forced open. A new screen was erected in time for the Friday afternoon performance.

Acton Gazette – 14 July 1939

COURT TO DECIDE ON £1,492 CINEMA FIND

The ownership of £1,492 found in a wallet under a seat in the **Regal** cinema Falkirk on Wednesday night will be decided in court today. The claimant is Mrs J Frew of Pleasance, Falkirk, who missed the wallet containing her daughter's money after a night at the cinema. The wallet was found by Mr Peter Miller, an employee of the Liverpool firm of cleaners at work in the building, who took it at once to the Police Station.

Birmingham Post – 1 September 1956

Innovation

PALAIS DELUXE LIVERPOOL

What has proved an innovation of very decided benefit to the audience is now to be seen at the **Palais Deluxe** Liverpool, where an automatic sign is placed at the side of the proscenium and gives the titles of the pictures. This device is electrically controlled and not only shows in subdued red the film being screened but also indicates "the next picture". It has been entirely constructed by the electricians of the house and constitutes a vast improvement upon the method of placing a card in the orchestra or merely relying upon the screen titles. For so a very cosmopolitan a centre as this great seaport, such a device is a real necessity and enables visitors from far off climes a much better idea as to the 'features' before their gaze.

The Bioscope – 30 December 1915

LETTERS

PALAIS/ASTOR BROMLEY



On p21 of the last Bulletin, Charles Morris mentions the Astor Bromley. This opened in 1911 as the Palais de Luxe. It closed in 1940 and became a Ministry of Food store for butter and margarine and was later used by CMA in connection with large screen television experiments. In 1949 it was acquired by the former manager of the Gaumont Bromley, Albert Watts and had a civic welcome when it opened on 11 April that year. The theatre was modernised under the direction of Harry G Payne LIRBA of Bromley, the general contractors were Collings Ltd of Peckham. The interior walls were sprayed in warm tones and there were 730 seats fitted by WW Turner. It was renamed the Pullman in November 1954, modernised again in 1963 and reopened as the Astor. It closed on 24 September 1977 and was converted to bingo, which closed in April 1985. The auditorium was demolished that year and the façade in 1988. I have enclosed a copy of a rare handbill from the Palais.

David Jones

16MM

Enjoyed the latest edition of the Bulletin but was particularly interested in the excellent article by Mr Charles Morris about 16mm cinema. During my career as a projectionist, I worked for eleven years part-time for the Merseyside Film Institute Society in Bluecoat Chambers Art Centre, Liverpool. This was the oldest film society outside of London, opening in 1934 and ran for sixty years. It was a full-time operation over six days with film shows twice nightly. The programmes covered current offerings of the day, classics, documentaries and special educational shows. The equipment we used was Elf Lite pedestal machines EX5000 and EX6000, although before my time it was Bell and Howell. The cinema held 100 persons in comfortable surroundings and had a membership of 2,500. I was sorry to see it close, which only came about because a local independent cinema opted to show similar material to that of the Institute but on 35mm, the trade insisting that 16mm give way to 35mm. Incidentally Liverpool also had another 16mm cinema in the headquarters of the North Western Gas Board. This was a lecture and boardroom but was also used to screen the Annual Ten Best Amateur films, organised by the Institute of Amateur Photographers.

Mike Taylor

THE MAN WITH THE TRAY

Lovely to read about the Rex Elland but for the health of Mr Morris (pictured serving ices) I recount my first experience on sales service. When my manager realised the 14-year-old lad he had taken on could actually lift the tray, being several decades younger than the rest of the staff, tray sales became one of my jobs when business warranted it. With a fully loaded tray slung on me as in the picture, a colleague shouted at me, "take that off now before you break your b***** neck!" I was then shown how to wear the tray correctly, over one shoulder and under the other. With your back taking the weight you could stand quite comfortably, staring at the swirling colours of the projection beam cutting through cigarette smoke and leaving hands free to serve the rapidly defrosting goodies.

Ben Doman

BLACKPOOL

Philip Mayer in his letter on p21 of the last Bulletin says that he had not heard it said the Royal Pavilion Blackpool was a purpose-built cinema until I mentioned it in Bulletin 54/2.

However in 1917 an item in the *Blackpool Gazette* refuted the idea that it was a converted garage. Part 14 of a series, looking back over the previous 50 years, reviewed the Blackpool cinemas that had been established by then and on 27 July 1917, page 3, referring to the origins of the Royal Pavilion it stated "It was *specially built* (my italics) for the purpose in 1909. Previous to that time Mr W Blacker had been presenting pictures at the Colosseum but as that curious building was required for other purposes, the land in Rigby Road was purchased and in three months Mr Robert Fenton, not unknown as the present proprietor of the Hippodrome, built the Royal Pavilion from plans prepared by Mr J Barraclough".

The Colosseum stood on the other side of the road and was actually Blackpool's first permanent cinema (films had otherwise only been shown in the local theatres). It was an octagonal prefabricated timber building originally sited in a pleasure ground, the Raikes Hall Gardens, until 1901 when it was dismantled and re-erected in Tyldesley Road Blackpool. There it housed various shows including the *Royal Italian Circus* and the spectacle *Savage South Africa* before turning to films as the Picturedrome in 1906. It was a primitive operation, heated by coke stoves with the audience seated on wooden benches, which obviously would not meet the requirements of the proposed Cinematograph Act. Plans were duly laid for its replacement – a purpose-built cinema to be erected nearby – which would conform to the forthcoming legislation.

This opened on 23 July 1909 as the *New Royal Pavilion* with a reported capacity of nearly 1,000 on the ground floor and 50 in the small balcony. It was an immediate success and encouraged the builder Fenton and architect Barraclough to buy the Hippodrome in Church Street a year later and convert it into a cinema with a raked floor and a balcony. The manager and, from 1919, the owner of the Royal Pavilion was WA Blacker, who had previously run the Colosseum/Picturedrome. This then became a roller skating rink and eventually a garage and bus park (and is possibly why the *Royal Pavilion* is thought to have once been a garage) In 1936 the old structure was finally demolished and replaced by the Coliseum [sic] Coach Station, which served as Blackpool's main coach station for the next fifty years. The site has now been swallowed up by the Foxhall Village regeneration project.

Ray Dolling

Re the debate in CTA Bulletin 54/3. There's a brief paragraph in *The Bioscope* dated 15 July 1909, which refers to the newly opened *New Royal Pavilion* as having to turn hundreds of people away, such was its initial success. No mention of it being a garage conversion. James Alfred Barraclough – "an expert in designing picture palaces" – is reported as being the architect.

Terry Hanstock

Regarding confusion in the Bulletin and on the Cinema Treasures page for the *Royal Pavilion Theatre*, Blackpool opening. A newspaper clipping from 8 March 1909 sent by Phillip Mayer from Liverpool says the building was formerly the *King's Hall*, then became the King's Hall Garage. An application for change of use was turned down and went to appeal on 26 April 1909. Apparently the appeal was successful as the *Royal Pavilion* was opened on 26 June 1909. There would not be sufficient time from April to June to demolish the garage and build the 'purpose built' cinema. It would however be possible to convert the building in that time (add a balcony and projection box and raise the roof?)

Ken Roe

Without checking, I don't think I'd ever seen the newspaper cutting mentioning the name *Kings Hall*. This solves the conundrum of a building tall enough to have a balcony being an early purpose-built cinema. It is more likely that a late Victorian or Edwardian public hall would have a balcony than an early purpose-built cinema. I imagine that the line of development is that of 'Kings Hall with balcony', 'conversion to garage', then 'conversion to cinema'. I think it less likely for the balcony to have been added for intended cinema use.

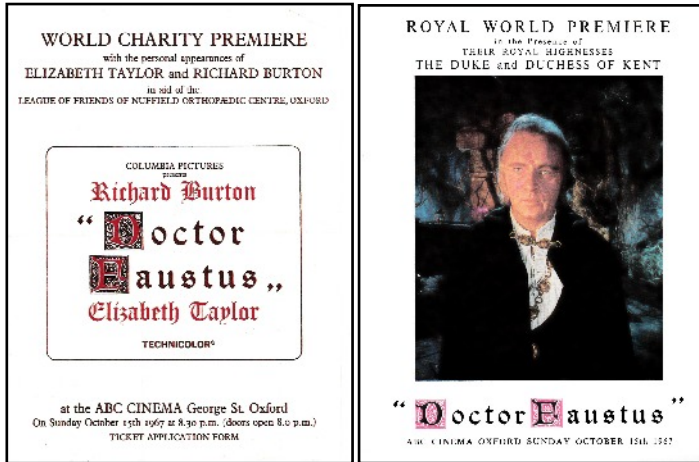
Richard Gray

OXFORD CITY CENTRE CINEMAS

Thanks for this interesting article. I missed a reference to the Scala in Walton Street, now closed but for many years considered the most interesting cinema in Oxford with all the latest art-house releases. Is there a plaque on the site? I should have checked on my recent visit.

The writer mentions the ABC première of the film of *Dr Faustus*, attended by its stars Burton and Taylor. Could I add that the reason the couple attended was that they had earlier starred in a theatre production of the play (in the nearby Playhouse). Burton had studied briefly at Oxford during the war and donated generously to various undergraduate causes.

Caroline Behr



The première of *Doctor Faustus* at the ABC George Street was originally announced as a 'World Charity Premiere' but became a 'Royal World Premiere' when the Duke and Duchess of Kent agreed to attend.

Dave Jones

I much enjoyed Mike Whitcombe's canter round Oxford's City centre cinemas. I can add a couple of footnotes to his coverage of the Super/ABC/Odeon Magdalen Street. The cinema was designed by FGM Chancellor, who took over Frank Matcham's architectural practice following Matcham's death in 1920. JC Leed was the local architect, who probably supervised the building works. According to Ian Meyrick's excellent book *Oxfordshire Cinemas*, the builders were local firm Hinkins & Frewin. Interestingly, the Oxford Cinematograph Company, for whom the cinema was built, is still listed as being in business by Companies House and may still own it.

The three floors above the entrance (which Mike correctly suggests: "didn't suggest a grand cinema") were never part of the cinema property. The space may well have provided above-the-shop living accommodation for the bookseller who previously occupied the ground floor and later it provided extra bedrooms for an adjoining hotel. When the hotel was demolished, the connecting passageways were simply bricked up. In recent times there has been an attempt to discover who actually owns this part of the building, following an enquiry which came in on the Frank Matcham Society website (yes, this is a plug for FMS!) but so far as I am aware the mystery remains unsolved.



Mirrors in the foyer of the Odeon Magdalen Street, Oxford

Mike mentions the Costa coffee shop installed in the long, narrow entrance foyer. Large, floor-to-ceiling mirrors were originally installed in this area to make the space look wider – as was often the case in American cinemas in similar situations. These were boarded-up and forgotten about for many decades but when their existence was pointed out to Costa's architect the mirrors were immediately unearthed and restored (see picture bottom previous column). Wouldn't it be great if every big company willingly went to such trouble and extra expense when a bit of conservation work was suggested to them?

Giles Woodforde

I read Mike Whitcombe's article on the rich cinema heritage of central Oxford with interest and can add a few points. With regard to the Super (Odeon Magdalen Street) I can confirm that the builder was Hinkins and Frewin, not the architectural practice of Frank Matcham and Co, which worked with the local architect JC Leed. The rooms at the front have always been inaccessible from the cinema except via a window in the former café and then across the foyer roof. This route is still available after unscrewing a wall panel in Odeon 2 to uncover the window.



With regard to the Ritz (Odeon George Street) Mike says that sources are wrong in saying that the Cinematograph Theatre / George Street Cinema was demolished to make way for the Ritz. In fact, both this cinema and St George the Martyr were demolished; the auditorium is on the site of the church building and the foyer, a new road cut through in front of the cinema and a shop on the other side replaced the old cinema. So everyone is right, hurrah! The photograph shows the old cinema, with the church building to the left. The tower of the Old Fire Station, which became a theatre, can be seen beyond.

Definitions of city centre can vary but I would include the North Oxford Kinema / Scala / Phoenix, which still operates in Walton Street and, at 107 years old, is the oldest in the central area.

Ian Meyrick, *Author Oxfordshire Cinemas*; photo courtesy Jeremy Buck

PALACE LISTING?

Regarding the piece reprinted from the Liverpool Echo on page 18 of the last Bulletin about the former Palace cinema, Kemble Street in Prescot, Greater Liverpool, Peter Wyld and myself have looked into it and as far as we can see this is not statutorily listed, although it is possible that it may be locally listed. The Historic England involvement in its regeneration may well be part of a Heritage area action initiative as a joint venture with the local authority.

Richard Gray

CURZON CLARIFICATIONS

The Curzon/Classic Bexhill was twinned but for bingo downstairs and cinema upstairs. It never had two screens. The Curzon had several operators until it finally closed in 2008 (anyone got exact date?) and is now a JD Wetherspoons pub.

The Curzon Folkestone became a Classic, later Cannon again under a different management and was closed 18 February 1988 due to structural problems.

The Curzon St Leonards was never twinned and closed as a cinema on 23 January 1977. There may have been plans to twin (Bulletin 8/6 p49) but these never happened. Wonder how they would have achieved that – we will never know. It became a builders' merchants until that closed and it reopened as a Boutique Arts Centre called the Teatr Kino on 9 July 2015 including films, albeit the 1930s façade had long gone.

Tim McCullen

HMS ULYSSES

Some more info on the non-filming of *HMS Ulysses*. Sue Harper and Vincent Porter's book, *British cinema of the 1950s: the decline of deference* (paperback edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007 at p90), states that Robert Clark's successor as production manager at ABPC (he was removed from the post in 1958) cancelled several of his projects. One of these was *HMS Ulysses*, which was to have been directed by Michael Anderson, presumably following on from his success with *The Dam Busters* (also scripted by RC Sherriff).

Terry Hanstock

Referring to the never-made film of McLain's novel, there is a mutiny (though the plot précis below suggests that the story starts after the mutiny). I joined Warner-Pathé in the early 60s and recall some talk about *HMS Ulysses* not being made because of objections from the Admiralty regarding the depiction of or reference to a mutiny in the British navy. It would be really interesting if there were someone who could support this or, alternatively, disprove it.

Michael Jones

Plot: The novel features *HMS Ulysses*, a light cruiser that is well-armed and among the fastest ships in the world. Her crew is pushed well beyond the limits of endurance and the book starts in the aftermath of a mutiny. *Ulysses* puts to sea again to escort FR-77, a vital convoy heading for Murmansk. They are beset by numerous challenges: an unusually fierce Arctic storm, German ships and U-boats, as well as air attacks. All slowly reduce the convoy from 32 ships to only five. *Ulysses* is sunk in a failed attempt to ram a German cruiser after all her other weapons had been destroyed. This echoes events in which British G-class destroyer *HMS Glowworm* and *HMS Jervis Bay*, an armed merchant cruiser, sacrificed themselves by engaging larger opponents.

PICTURE HOUSE, RAWTENSTALL, LANCS

In reply to Tim McCullen's letter in the May/June Bulletin, the Unit Four did close as a four-screen cinema in May 1984. The ground floor, where three screens had been located, was converted to a snooker hall but the fourth screen, upstairs, was left empty. In February 1986, however, local man Dennis Geldard reopened the upstairs screen, having imported some ancient but functioning projection equipment that originated from the Co-op Hall cinema, Whalley and the Grand at Nelson (a cinema that Mr Geldard had renovated and run for a very short time in 1981). Within a few months Mr Geldard relinquished the Picture House to the Facealpha circuit, run by the infamous Robin Price. Mr Price's mini-empire went into liquidation in 1993 but another proprietor, a Mr Marsh, if I remember rightly, continued with Rawtenstall for a while. I don't think it lasted after 1994.

The 1,300-seat Picture House originally opened on 29 November 1920 with *The River's End* and *The Cruise of the Make Believes*. The proprietors, Messrs Wilmore and Wibsey, had other local cinema interests and were evidently great innovators. A season of 'Phonofilms' ran at the Picture House in 1927, before the official talkie era. Apparently the synchronisation and volume were very good but the sound was distinctly tinny. Also in the 1920s some black and white 3D films were shown and in one person's opinion were every bit as good as any of the subsequent 3D techniques (until digital arrived).

In 1930, on the death of Mr Wibsey, the Picture House was sold to Mr Harold Cookson, proprietor of the rival Pavilion cinema in Rawtenstall, for £28,000. During the war both cinemas were leased to Rawtenstall Cinemas Ltd and in 1947 they were sub-leased to J & J Theatres Ltd, who reintroduced 3D at the Picture House in the 1950s with four projectors so that a full feature could be screened without a break. In 1957 the cinemas reverted to Rossendale Cinemas Ltd then in December 1960 both were sold to the Star circuit. The Pavilion (built in 1911) became a bingo hall in 1963 but the Picture House continued as a cinema, being taken over by Unit Four in early 1975.

Charles Morris

SINGLE SCREEN CINEMAS

I'm working on a documentary film focusing on single-screen cinemas in the UK and would like to ask my fellow CTA members to send in their personal recommendations from the 350+ that are believed to still be operating in 2020. I'll be travelling the length and breadth of the country to document and record stories from a selection of these places. If readers have a favourite that has an unusual history, unique features, bags of personality or that is simply still reliably entertaining audiences today please email me at [supersinglescreens@gmail.com].

Sam Cuthbert

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [youtu.be/7QCMm25D230] A 27 minute video on the Russian version of Cinerama, Kinopanorama.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/v8er76y] A Wikimedia Commons page: Former Cinemas in England. Not a complete list but some good photos.
- ★ [www.widescreenmuseum.com] The American Widescreen Museum. This one I think we have featured before.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/tcxseml] From *Derbyshire Live* – Burton upon Trent cinemas across the years.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ybdm9oe3] From *Essex Live* – Images inside the Grade II listed State at Grays before work started to turn it into a Wetherspoons. *Sent in by Margaret Burgoine.*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9zx5n8y] From the *Hollywood Reporter* – a gallery of US movie theatre marquee messages in a time of Covid-19. *Sent in by Terry Hanstock & Martin Tapsell.*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y8mp239r] From the *Huddersfield Examiner* – the story of Jewish tailor Mark Freedman, who brought cinema to Huddersfield; with seven pictures.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y7tezrna] From *The Sentinel* – cinema of Stoke-on-Trent; with eleven photos.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/yb8jeq3f] From the *Liverpool Echo* – Liverpool's lost cinemas; with fifteen photos.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ya6nf3ep] From *Devon Live* – Inside the Paignton Picture House; with fifteen photos.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/y9slwpdw] From *Derbyshire Live* – Derby Cinemas that we've loved and lost; with twenty-six photos.
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ydhp3s82] From a South African newspaper – Lost cinemas of Cape Town; with eight photos. *Sent in by Bob Bradshaw.*
- ★ [youtu.be/OMGQCOK_L68] A three-minute British Pathé film on the opening of the Regal Minehead in 1934.
- ★ [longfordcinema.co.uk] Has a new [May 2020] video on the history of the building. It is the middle section of a three-part film. See also Miscellany on p10.

ARCHIVE

The Archive is temporarily closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. 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

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

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

100 years



Palace Theatre Appletongate, Newark-on-Trent.
Opened 5 July 1920. Architect Emily Bragg. Grade II listed.



Palladium 7 Gloddaeth Street, Llandudno.
Opened 30 August 1920. Architect Arthur S Hewitt. Grade II listed.

London's West End Cinemas

by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.

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

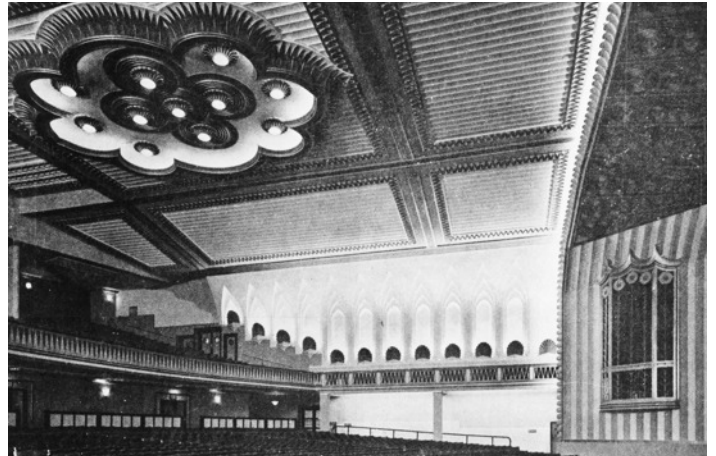
Price - £25.00 + £3 postage.



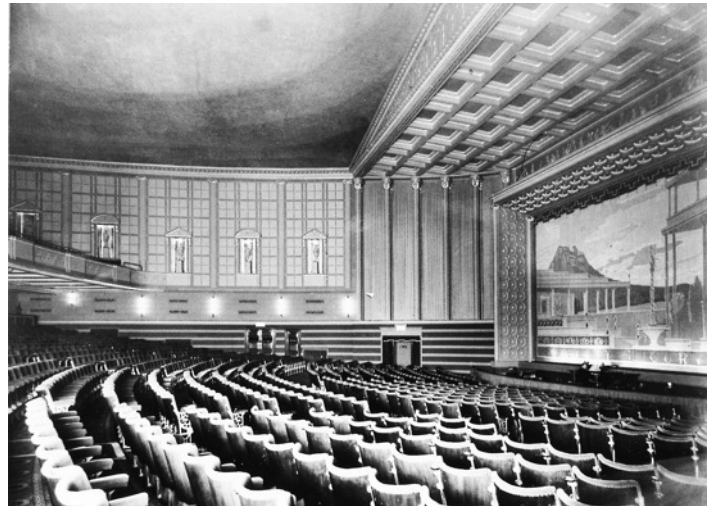
This is a redesigned and much enlarged third edition of a book not available for more than 20 years, fully updated by its original author, Allen Eyles. It is a complete record of all the cinemas that have entertained picture-goers in the West End from 1906 to 2013. There are maps, appendices of club cinemas and theatres as temporary cinemas as well as a name index.

Published in collaboration with English Heritage.

90 years



Rink (Gaugmont) 118 Windmill Lane, Smethwick.
Opened 7 July 1930. Architect William T Benslyn. Grade II listed.



New Victoria/Odeon 7 Clerk Street, Edinburgh.
Opened 25 August 1930. Architect William Edward Trent. B listed.

85 years



Odeon Kettlehouse Road, Kingstanding, Birmingham. Opened 22 July 1935. Architect J Cecil Clavering/Harry Weedon. Grade II listed.

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new members:

Paul McDonald, William Fowler, Joan Pearson, David McDonald, Chris O'Rourke and Gordon Dutton.

DONATIONS

Once more members have displayed their generosity by adding a donation to the renewal of their subscriptions. Our sincere thanks go to: J Barber, TE Benton, P Beresford, WC Birnie, CM Bryan, ME Burgione, RD Burke, LR Carter, M Charlesworth, B Claussen, MR Cleave, KA Clegg, GJV Crane, L Culver, MR Cunningham, PD Davenport, AR Davis, IJ Drummond, JD Elliott, IC Ewers, B Fitzpatrick, DW Foster, SW Freeman, RK Fuller, MP Greenslade, RJ Hawley, CE Hide, A Hodson, ECW Huggins, HB Jones, RA Lascaut, TDC Laughlan, AV Mabey, FWD Manders, WG Marriott, JL May, P Mellor, PG Moules, B Palmer, JB Powell, MJ Ryder, J Shevelan, RW Short, RP Skinner, BH Snowball, MD Staunton, M Taylor, PE Thackeray, WJB Thomson, DL Walkden, DB Williams, D Williamson, RF Wilson and M Wooffindin,

IN MEMORIAM

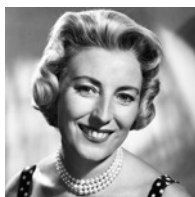
We have been sorry to learn of the deaths of the following CTA members in the period since the last issue of the Bulletin. Our sincere condolences are sent to their families and friends. Darryl McIntyre, John White, Ron Franklin, William Elliott and Stephen Coley.

Ray Ritmeester, Membership Secretary

NECROLOGY

DAME VERA LYNN 103

Vera Lynn began singing at the age of seven in the clubs of east London. She grew from child star to professional crooner and made her first radio broadcast in 1935, singing with the Joe Loss Orchestra. When she volunteered for war work, she was told the best thing she could do was to keep on being an entertainer. Vera discovered *We'll Meet Again* in the autumn of 1939; it is inseparable from the Second World War in most people's minds. In a poll by the *Daily Express*, she was voted by servicemen as their favourite entertainer and gained her Forces' Sweetheart nickname.



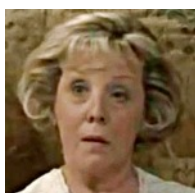
LITTLE RICHARD 87

He arrived in 1955 with *Tutti Frutti* and its famous "Wop bop a loo bop a lop bam boom!" Endless hits followed, including *Good Golly Miss Molly*. In the 1960s he appeared on the stage of many an Odeon, Gaumont and other independent theatres and cinemas, touring one-night stands, topping the bill and also as a support act.



JUNE BARRY 84

June appeared in countless TV programmes, including *Coronation Street*, *Z Cars* and *The Forsyte Saga*. She only appeared in one film, a Hammer Horror *The Terror of the Tongs* (1961) with Christopher Lee, which was a flop.



TIM BROOKE-TAYLOR 79

Tim was one third of *The Goodies* in the 1970s BBC comedy, which ran for nine series. It won a Silver Rose at Montreux for the *Kitten Kong* episode, where an over-size kitten climbs the Post Office Tower. Tim was also a panellist on the radio programme *I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*.



IRRFAN KHAN 53

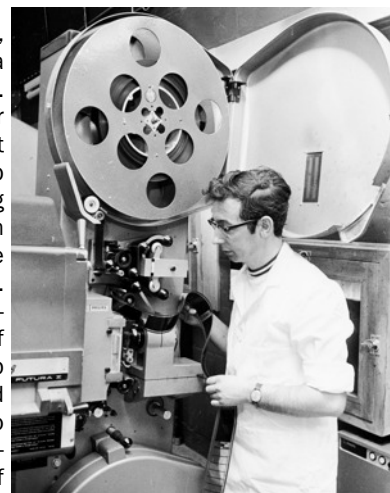
Bollywood star Irrfan made his screen debut in the 1988 drama *Salaam Bombay* about Mumbai's street children but he was perhaps best known for *Slumdog Millionaire*, which was nominated for ten Academy Awards in 2009. He also appeared in the 2012 hit *Life of Pi*.



OBITUARY

BILL PEARSON 88

Bill started work at the Orient, Aston in March 1947 as a trainee rewind boy; he was 15. When he was called up for National Service at Market Drayton, he became the camp film projectionist, showing training films for pilots, then showing ordinary films in the evening for the camp staff. After being demobbed he returned to the Orient to see if they would give him his job back but the position had been filled by a woman, to which his remark was "A woman in the box, never heard of it". He went to the box and saw it was me, (love at first sight).



Bill in the box at the ABC Coventry

They offered him another ABC house, the Piccadilly, Sparkbrook. We married in 1951. He also worked at the ABC, Bristol Road on Cinema and eventually at the MGM, Arcadian until he retired. He made his own movies, from transparencies, right up until he died.

Warwick University became interested in both of us, two professors interviewed us and one was writing a book on 'women in the box' but Bill called her a sexist because she called them Projectionists when in fact they were 'Projectionettes', she had to rewrite her book. One thing led to another and Goldsmiths University became interested and we were contacted by two female students who were doing media studies on the subject and asked if they could interview us, they also wanted to make a short film. They finished the film in 2019 and called it *Love in 35mm*, it was chosen for a BAFTA and director Federica Gargarella won it! So you see we have led a very full and wonderful life together and like ET he has now gone to the great cinema in the sky with all the stars. I'd like to think they both went home together.

Joan Pearson

JIM SCHULTZ 92

Jim Schultz, a cinema engineer of high repute, died in hospital in Leeds in late May. A lot of exhibitors up and down the country (and indeed abroad) will have known him and, like myself, will have had cause to be grateful to him. Jim's wife had died as recently as 2 April (Jim's birthday) and he declined rapidly following that.

Charles Morris

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

www.projectedpicturetrust.org



THE FIRST 'LUXURY LOUNGE'

Following on from the newsreel mention here is an article on the reopening of the ABC Lancaster with the new Luxury Lounge concept from the ABC News January 1967.

"I can tell you this," said manager Allan Kilpatrick to the local press, "there are not many cinemas as luxurious 'as this one.'" Manager Kilpatrick's remark was a neat summing-up of everything that had gone into the £25,000 facelift of the ABC Palace. Lancaster prior to its reopening on Boxing Day, 26 December, 1966.



A leaflet that was sent to every household in Lancaster



The final result

The **Palace** is unique among Britain's Cinemas for it introduces an entirely new concept in cinema-going. Until now we have been accustomed to the better and more expensive seats being in the circle but this traditional pattern is reversed at Lancaster. The old stalls area has been replaced by a luxury lounge fitted with the most up-to-date seating and completely unobscured sight lines to the screen. No more will a **Palace** patron dread a tall person with a big head sitting in front of him, for the patron will still be able to see perfectly without having to shift his head this way and that in an effort to maintain his view of the screen.

The **Palace** is the first of ABC's 269 theatres to have a luxury lounge area; the idea is completely new to Britain although it is in extensive use overseas where it has been warmly welcomed by patrons. Not the least of its advantages is that it enables cinema-goers to enjoy the best seats in the house without having to climb stairs to the circle, since the lounge area is at ground floor level.

For those who might hesitate to sit in the front row because of the psychological inhibitions against sitting too near the screen for eye comfort, it should be stated that the seating of the **Palace** is so designed that the angle of vision in front is identical with that at the back of the cinema downstairs. In addition the screen is curved and this adds to visual ease.

More leg room has been provided between the rows by sacrificing 300 seats, the lounge area now providing ultra-comfortable seating for 446 people. The transformation of the theatre did not require major structural alterations apart from the new seating, a brand new system of air conditioning and excellent personal facilities.

The circle has not been altered structurally but the Company's decorators have transformed its appearance into luxurious elegance. A pleasing subdued effect has been achieved by the use of a dark coffee décor with gilt embellishments. But it is, of course, in the

lounge area where they have really gone to town. In line with modern furnishing trends the walls are covered with fabric, deep blue felt for the back of the area and the rear part of the side walls. Contrasting with the blue is the regal gold draping framing the screen. The lounge area is lighted by elegant gilt chandeliers with drop pearl candle-type bulbs. Another new feature is the setting of colour spotlights at the front of the circle, playing down on the screen draping for various colour effects.

Architect and designer of the lounge area was Mr CJ Foster assisted by Mr D Ryan and a press preview was held a few days before the reopening when the details of the experimental project were explained to the Journalists present. The local press was extremely enthusiastic and came out with such headlines as "Lancaster **Palace** chosen for luxury seating project" and "Sheer luxury to woo back cinema-goers." Attending the reopening on behalf of ABC were Mr FC Cockerill, Circuit Supervisor and Mr GE Evans, North West District Manager.



Dignitaries at the reopening

The film chosen for the re-opening had to match the importance of the occasion, so what could be better than the 17-million dollar (and worth every cent) production of *My Fair Lady*. Business since the reopening has been outstanding and it hasn't taken the cinema-going public of Lancaster long to go for their new luxury lounge in a big way. One couple walked out of the theatre because the lounge area was full, although seats were available in the circle!



The frontage of the ABC/Palace Lancaster in June 2008

The **Palace's** manager is 27-year-old Allan Kilpatrick, a live-wire in show business and a hundred per cent enthusiastic about his new responsibility. This is the second ABC theatre where Allan has been in charge at its re-opening, for he was manager of the **Regal** Bracknell, when it reopened after renovation. A luxurious theatre offering a new concept in cinema-going, a go-ahead manager and an enthusiastic staff eager to give the public the service it wants, augurs extremely well for the future of ABC in the country town of Lancaster.

Sent in by Ben Doman

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