



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

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The former Clifton Leamington Spa, a cinema named after its founder – see p16; photo taken March 2006 {37473}



The former Oxford in Undercliffe, Bradford, which was gutted by fire on 28 February – see Newsreel p24; photo taken March 2006 {48081}

CTA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday 19 June at 5:30pm by Zoom

With Covid-19 restrictions still likely to be in place on the above date, which will make a physical meeting difficult, it has been decided that the AGM will be conducted by Zoom, so that as many members as possible are able to participate.

Members will need to book in advance using this TicketSource link:
www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-cinema-theatre-association

Being an AGM, there will be no charge and the deadline for bookings is Friday 18 June. Nominations for committee members are invited and should be sent to the Secretary, Adam Unger (address opposite) to arrive seven days before the meeting.

The draft accounts are on p7.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

By the time you read this, the date the Government hopes to implement step 3 out of lockdown – 17 May – will be upon us (24 May in Northern Ireland). Because this issue went to press about two weeks beforehand, it will not have been possible to bring you all the up-to-date information. Cinemas will be allowed to reopen but I obviously can't provide details of each individual circuit or cinema's arrangements. I haven't found even one cinema's announcement that mentions how they will implement social distancing. The Government's website says that "some" events will be allowed in indoor venues with a capacity limit of 1,000 people or half-full (whichever is a lower number). This statement is repeated on the *Screen Daily* website but I suspect many cinemas will employ the booking and social distancing measures that they did when the tier system was in operation last autumn. There is a report in *The Guardian* of 25 March that Curzon is looking into separate 'vaccinated only' and 'no jab' screenings. It's all very confusing.

I have requested that you use the Bulletin email address opposite to contact me. Unfortunately some members have been putting the 'org' and the 'uk' the wrong way round [bulletin@cta-org.uk] and, of course, the message gets rejected. Can you please double check you have them the right way round so it reads bulletin@cta-uk.org. The same thing could also happen to other committee members' email addresses opposite. It's an easy mistake to make.

Without mentioning names, I had an email from a member who made a typing mistake and said he was going for his first 'jag' [jab]. I suggested that after he had had his second 'jag' he would be like 'two jags' John Prescott!

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

Quick Guide to CTA Social Media



www.cta-uk.org



www.facebook.com/cinematheatreorguk



www.twitter.com/Ctheatreassoc



www.instagram.com/cinematheatreorguk



www.ticketsource.co.uk



Zoom talks and presentations platform

Useful CTA Contacts

digital@cta-uk.org : enquires about digital services

visits@cta-uk.org : enquires about talks/events bookings

info@cta-uk.org : general enquires

Amazon Smile link : smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1100702-0

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.

PATRONS: Alan Baxter; Allen Eyles; Lucinda Lambton

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Full Membership (UK).....	£33; under 25 (with proof of age) £16
Overseas (Europe Standard Air Mail & World Economy).....	£43
Overseas (World Standard Air Mail).....	£56
Overseas (Digital CTA Bulletin).....	£33
Associate Membership (UK & Worldwide).....	£10
Life Membership (UK and overseas digital).....	£500
65 & over (with proof of age).....	£400
Life Membership (Overseas).....	Air Mail £840; Economy Mail £645

All membership and subscription enquiries should be sent to

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Ray Ritmeester subs@cta-uk.org

66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB

Items for possible inclusion in the Bulletin should be sent to

BULLETIN EDITOR: Harry Rigby bulletin@cta-uk.org

65 Tennyson Avenue, Harrogate, North Yorks, HG1 3LE

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: David Trevor-Jones + chairman@cta-uk.org

47 The Street, Old Basing, Basingstoke, RG24 7BX

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Ian Meyrick +

11 Tarrant Avenue, Witney, OX28 1EE

SECRETARY: Adam Unger + honsec@cta-uk.org

59 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, TW11 0DJ

TREASURER: Neville C Taylor + accounts@cta-uk.org

Flat One, 128 Gloucester Terrace, London, W2 6HP

CASEWORK COMMITTEE – Chairman: Richard Gray + casework@cta-uk.org

45 Arnold Road, Bow, London, E3 4NU

Members: as main committee plus Rob Chesterfield, Tim Hatcher,

Jane Jephcote, Peter Lea, Mark Price, Vicky Simon & Peter Wylde

ARCHIVIST: Clive Polden archive@cta-uk.org

14 Ivychurch Gardens, Cliftonville, Margate, CT9 3YG

ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST: David Simpson

PUBLICATIONS & SALES OFFICER: Jeremy Buck + sales@cta-uk.org

34 Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN

WEBMASTER: Rachel Woodforde web@cta-uk.org

69A Mill Street, Kidlington, Oxford, OX5 2EE

VISITS CO-ORDINATOR: Ray Ritmeester visits@cta-uk.org

66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB

PICTURE HOUSE EDITOR: Allen Eyles picture.house@cta-uk.org

13 Tennyson Court, Paddockhall Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1EZ

CTA SCOTLAND: Gordon Barr, Gary Painter scotland@cta-uk.org

11 Merker Terrace, Linlithgow, EH49 6DD

CTA CYMRU/WALES: John Skinner, Jon Williams wales@cta-uk.org

3 Swan Lane, Ystalyfera, Swansea, SA9 2JB

CTA NORTH: vacancy

CTA WESSEX: David Eve, Gary Trinder wessex@cta-uk.org

Far Ends, 28 Courtenay Road, Lower Parkstone, Poole, BH14 0HD

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Emma Beeston, Kevin Gooding, Lynda Hillman, Rachel Marks, Richard Norman, Tim McCullen, Ken Roe.

Please use info@cta-uk.org if uncertain to whom to address an e-mail enquiry; this address will be monitored and e-mails redirected if necessary.

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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

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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
SUNDAY 20 JUNE**

ZOOM EVENTS MEETINGS UPDATE

WHY ZOOM?

As many members will be aware over the past few months the CTA has been promoting talks and presentations by using Zoom as it has not been possible to arrange physical meetings. We are pleased to report that this arrangement has met with growing success as the awareness and audience figures are steadily increasing. If you haven't joined our Zoom meetings yet, why not give it a try – you may be pleasantly surprised!

LAST MONTH'S ZOOM TALK

We were absolutely delighted at the attendance for the April meeting which reached an all-time high of over 200, at which we enjoyed a stunning presentation on the history of Atmospheric theatres, taking us on a worldwide and colourful tour with an informative commentary. The CTA would like to thank our colleagues at the Los Angeles Historic Theatre Foundation (LAHTF) for their generosity in offering the presentation on what was our first international link-up and from the feedback received it was certainly a hit with our viewers from the UK, USA, Europe and as far afield as Australia and Bahrain.

EVENTS BOOKINGS

Members may have noticed that we have introduced an on-line ticket booking procedure for future events using TicketSource. This service is the first port of call to book a Zoom talk or other event (either free or chargeable) and the Zoom link is sent the day before the event date. We have also introduced differential booking charges to offer members a lower charge as a benefit of membership. Naturally, our talks are open to both members and non-members, with everyone welcome.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to using the established methods of Events promotion, the CTA is gradually expanding its presence in the different social media platforms. This helps us in reaching a potential wider audience who may otherwise be unaware of our work and activities, which will help us increase our Membership and influence in the longer term.



CTA VIRTUAL TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Zoom Cinema Magazine Programme

Talk No 8: Saturday 5 June at 5:30pm (UK time)

THE PARAMOUNT STORY

By Richard Norman



Paramount Tottenham Court Road, London (1938)

Hollywood's legendary 'Paramount Pictures Corporation' film studios were unique in British cinema history as, just after the coming of talking pictures, they invested in building a small but significant chain of cinemas in the UK in order to showcase their first-run feature films. Built between 1930 to 1937, they were located in the major city centres – Manchester, Newcastle, Leeds, Glasgow, Liverpool, London's Tottenham Court Road and Birmingham, (additionally with a leased theatre in Cardiff).

With their large seating capacities their design was the last word in luxury and patron comfort and entertainment (films and stage shows), as they were heavily influenced by the transatlantic style of movie palaces. These schemes were designed by one of the UK's foremost cinema/theatre specialist architectural practices of the period, Verity and Beverley. These super-cinemas were initially named Paramount Theatres and subsequently from 1939 they were acquired in batches by Oscar Deutsch's combine and eventually rebranded as Odeons.



Additionally, Paramount had an early foray in London with the Plaza Lower Regent Street (1926) and a financial stake in the Carlton Haymarket (1927). Attracted to the UK's strong market for film exhibition, they also had a financial interest in the four London suburban Atmospheric theatres branded Astoria at Brixton, Old Kent Road, Streatham and Finsbury Park.

The introduction to this talk will cover an overview of the Paramount theatres' development in the UK and we will then enjoy a rarely seen video that takes us on a composite tour of these super-cinemas, which has never previously been filmed as a group. By modern standards, this video is considered a 'vintage' recording and has therefore been remastered especially for this presentation. The commentary is spoken by the late Tony Moss, a great authority of cinema history and the CTA's former President.

QUIZ OF UK CINEMA PHOTOS

A guest photographer is invited to provide a dozen photographs from their personal collection for a quiz. Members are invited to participate in the quiz and we open the chat room for participants to offer their answers.

MEMBERS OPEN CHAT SESSION

Why not keep in contact with other members? After the main event and quiz have finished stay on as you are invited to join us in the popular 'pub chat' session discussing cinema-related topics of your choosing that you would like to share with others. If you are shy and don't feel like speaking, then feel free to just enjoy listening! You are welcome in any situation. You don't have to stay to the end and leave whenever it suits you, maybe when dinner is ready! This is an open-ended meeting, closing when either the conversation or the virtual 'pub bar' runs dry!

BOOKING THIS TALK



CTA talks and presentations are open to everyone - members and non-members alike. Booking is done on-line using TicketSource www.ticketsource.co.uk. Simply insert 'Cinema Theatre' in their search box. Tickets are Members: £3 and Non-Members £5.

Please ensure that you complete the registration link that accompanies your ticketsource confirmation.

... next talk overleaf >>>



The Paramount Pictures distribution office in Liverpool in July 2007

Zoom Cinema Magazine Programme

Talk No 9: Saturday 3 July at 5:30pm (UK time)

WHEN CINEMA LET IN THE LIGHT

By Martin Cleave

Light orchestral music formed a significant part of 20th Century popular culture, so unsurprisingly it found its way into the cinema-going experience of the pre-Beatles era. Through historic recordings and vintage broadcasts, this presentation will feature the orchestras of the Commodore Hammersmith and Troxy Stepney, among others, accompanied by images of the cinemas they performed in. It will also feature compositions by theatre organists including Sidney Torch and Louis Mordish. Also, hear how the Pearl & Dean theme sounded after the pillars faded and all about Joan Sims' 'larkly goings-on in the two-and-threes'.

Martin Cleave has a lifelong interest in music. He began learning to play the piano at the age of 7 and is currently Pianist and Music Manager at the Royal Academy of Dance. In his spare time he is conductor for the 'Eltham Park Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Orchestra'. Martin is also a long-time member of the CTA and the Light Music Society.

Please note that this is an illustrated talk with music accompaniment examples. To fully enjoy the music within the talk, it is recommended that you listen with either external speakers or headphones.

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or email: membership@cinema-organs.org.uk

www.cinema-organs.org.uk

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Please ensure that you complete the registration link that accompanies your ticketsource confirmation.



The recently revealed façade of the Dominion/Safari Harrow, which will be restored – see Late News p29; photos by Gary Donaldson at UnrestrictedTheatre.co.uk

PUBLICATIONS

Back Numbers Available

PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

Listed below are the back numbers of *Picture House* that are still available:

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 16	£3.00	Dominion London; 3000 plus; John Broadley remembers.
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 22	£3.50	Burrell, Foley, Fischer; Palace Theatre London; David Nye.
No 24	£4.50	Oldest Cinema - Harringay; Cardiff Round-up; Odeon Miscellany.
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: <i>Essoldo</i> – 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 50th 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 remembers Pt1.
No 45	£8.50	Classic Repertory Cinemas; Blackpool Cinemas; Thomas Jackson; Bernard Snowball remembers Pt2.

There are also available a few second-hand copies of out-of-print issues of *Picture House* 9, 10, 14/15, 20 & 23, 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 2019 are £4.00 per year (6 issues), individual copies are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2020 and 2021 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 £3.40 to your total order for post and packing.

Ordering details below.

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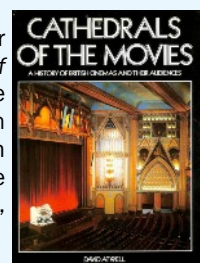
(reviewed in recent Bulletins)

The Matcham Directory – £10.00 plus postage

Abandoned Cinemas of the World – £29.50 plus postage

Second-Hand Books

We have a selection of second-hand books for sale, including rare titles such as *Cathedrals of the Movies*, *The Picture Palace*, etc. To receive a full list with around 50 titles, please send an email to the Sales Officer sales@cta-uk.org with 'Second Hand Book List' as the subject. Or write to the Sales Officer, 34 Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN (SAE appreciated). Thanks to Michael Ryder and Maurice Brader for recent donations of books.



Ordering

For post and packing: total order value up to £20.00 please add £3.40, total order value from £20.01 to £40.00 please add £4.40, total order value from £40.01 to £60.00 please add £6.40. 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.

CARTOON CORNER



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

HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II* Listed



The operator of the nightclub currently established in the former Regal in Uxbridge is to be requested to effect removal of vegetation presently protruding from the upper section of the building's façade.

Photo taken March 2004, which unfortunately doesn't show the offending vegetation.

Current specifications for renovation of the Granada in Walthamstow stipulate that the existing paint scheme shall be consolidated, with only a sole indicative area fully restored in order to exemplify the original palette. This is unsatisfactory to the Association, which supports the inaugural detailing being either revealed or replicated. Bond Bryan Ltd has now been appointed by the local Council to execute the project.

Funding comprising a sum of between four and five million pounds from the government's Coastal Renewal Programme has been allocated to the Dreamland complex in Margate. Present plans encompass reinstatement of the main section of the auditorium as a theatre, last employed as such in 1975; additionally the two cinemas in the former balcony area would be retained. See Newsreel p27.

Grade II Listed

The finalised planning application relating to the Grand in Westbourne has been submitted. Obscuration of the murals will now be obviated by the erection of protective Perspex screens. No original plasterwork will be removed from the foyer block, although a pervasive light grey colour scheme will be effected.

The freehold of the Ritz in Ilkeston has been sold for £660,000. The bingo operation has terminated and related signage has been removed. The local Council recognises the significance of the structure and will alert the CTA to relevant evolving circumstances. See photo on cover Bulletin 53/5.



The planning application relating to the Savoy in Burnt Oak has been approved; this integrates responses to the comments of the Association. It is intended that all notable elements of the cinema shall be retained.

The current owner of the Regal in Kingston-upon-Thames has dismissed his previous architects and planning consultants. It is unknown if the previously approved scheme will be amended within the remit of the current applicable permissions or if a disparate strategy will be formulated.

It is proposed that a low block of dressing rooms to the rear of the Troxy in Stepney be demolished and that the land thus vacated be combined with an adjacent plot upon which dwellings would be constructed. It is stated that the profit from this enterprise would finance refurbishment of the cinema, including partial restoration of the foyer to original designs. *Photo top next column taken September 2004*



Unlisted

The Gaumont in Birkenhead has been purchased by a developer whose intent is to build an apartment block, although the furniture outlet presently occupying the building continues to trade. The cinema is endowed with a distinguished auditorium, the loss of which would prove regrettable; a watching brief will thus be maintained. See photo p22 Bulletin 55/1.

The principle of demolition of the Majestic in Cradley Heath was previously established as permissible by the local Council in its lapsed approval of an unfulfilled scheme. The building is currently being cleared of content following utilisation as a storage facility and the local authority has been contacted to request protection of stained-glass windows. The structure has deteriorated to an unsatisfactory degree and is situated in a neglected section of the town, which currently features many shuttered retail units. It is thus anticipated that the Council would view favourably any proposal which could aid rejuvenation of the area. Another case that will be monitored closely is presented thereby. See photo p6 Bulletin 54/6.

Permission has been granted to demolish the Adelphi in Moston; a stricture that full recording of the structure be undertaken has been imposed. The Manchester Archaeological Society wishes to excavate the site in an attempt to locate foundations of a prior cinema thereon. See photo p22 Bulletin 54/6.

Planning permission to demolish The Point in Milton Keynes has expired; however, a recommendation has been made that a new Certificate of Immunity from Listing be issued. See cover photo Bulletin 54/1.

An application to develop the site of the Premier in Somercotes has been submitted. The frontage of the cinema would be integrated into the contemplated housing block; the original auditorium was destroyed by a conflagration in 1960. See photo p23 Bulletin 54/6.

The Association's press release concerning the Regal in Wakefield has generated considerable local attention, including that from a local businessman who has expressed interest in the possibility of repurposing the building as a live-music venue. See photo p27 Bulletin 55/1.

A local actor had been investigating the prospect of operating the Scala in Worcester as a community performance venue. However, the local Council has purchased that property for theatrical usage and he is therefore now considering the Gaumont as an alternative. The CTA is offering its moral support. See photo p27 Bulletin 55/1.

A small 'time capsule' has been laid at the site of the Odeon in Kensington, for inclusion in which the Association supplied several relevant articles.

Proposed Planning System Changes

The CTA has responded to a consultation upon a series of proposed changes to planning law. A key concern is that permitted development rights to demolish would be extended to locally listed buildings. The Heritage Alliance has convened a working group with the objective of assembling collective opposition to this proposition; the Association will become a signatory body to the resultant expression of disapprobation.

THE CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

Company limited by guarantee No. 4428778: Registered Charity No. 1100702

	Turnover	2021	2020
Profit and Loss Account for the period from 1st March 2020 to 28th February 2021	Members' subscriptions	£ 25,406	£ 25,227
	Members' payments for visits and events	£ 255	£ 6,220
	Income from sales	£ 4,459	£ 2,901
		£ 30,120	£ 34,348
	Cost of memberships		
	Cost of CTA Bulletin	£ 16,408	£ 16,200
	Cost of Picture House	£ 5,578	£ 4,897
	Cost of sales	£ 2,257	£ 2,012
	Cost of visits and events	£ 511	£ 6,449
		£ 24,754	£ 29,558
	Gross profit	£ 5,366	£ 4,790
	Other income		
	Donations	£ 5,504	£ 5,344
	GiftAid on subscriptions and donations	£ 5,137	£ 5,230
	Legacies	£ 35,409	£ 0
		£ 46,050	£ 10,574
	Administrative expenses		
	Archive costs	£ 11,876	£ 18,707
	Casework costs	£ 11,519	£ 14,167
	Other costs	£ 10,297	£ 9,500
		£ 33,692	£ 42,374
	Operating surplus/(deficit)	£ 17,724	£ (27,010)
	Interest receivable	£ 2,619	£ 2,733
	Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities	£ 20,343	£ (24,277)
	Change in value of book stock	£ (1,937)	£ 248
	Overall Surplus/(deficit) for period	£ 18,406	£ (24,029)

Balance Sheet as at 28th February 2021

	28 Feb 2021	29 Feb 2020
CURRENT ASSETS & LIABILITIES		
Book stock at Director's valuation	£ 11,469	£ 13,406
Cash at Bank	£ 163,524	£ 143,181
M&G Charibond (at net cost)	£ 49,419	£ 49,419
NET CURRENT ASSETS	£ 224,412	£ 206,006
RESERVES		
Current assets brought forward at 1st March	£ 206,006	£ 230,035
Surplus (deficit) for current period	£ 18,406	£ (24,029)
TOTAL RESERVES AT 28th FEBRUARY	£ 224,412	£ 206,006

PROVISIONAL : This statement has been prepared to give members information on the financial position of the Association. The full accounts have been approved by the CTA's Directors via e-mail communications as Covid-19 regulations prevented personal meetings. The accounts are presently with our Chartered Accountant and await his approval. However the fully detailed accounts, as usually presented to members at the CTA AGM, will be available as a PDF in the members' area of the CTA website in due course.

KETTERING GAUMONT

By Mike Carr

In 1912, on a plot of land where Kettering High Street joined Lower Street and facing Bakehouse Hill, The Rotherham Electric Theatre Company commenced the erection of a cinema. Opening on 10 May 1913, the **Kettering Electric Pavilion** presented a restrained, elegant façade, bringing a touch of class to an otherwise undistinguished but busy, shopping street.

At street level, the frontage was divided into three sections, a central entrance vestibule open to the elements with a lock-up shop unit either side. Across the threshold a mosaic panel proclaimed, "The Electric Pavilion" after which six white marble steps ascended to a central pay-box with a set of double doors on either side. When out of hours, a pair of iron latticework gates were drawn across the entrance and secured by a chain and padlock.



The Electric Pavilion Kettering

Above the shop units and entrance, the masonry incorporated three blank panels and at either end of each was a narrow window. Above, a further band of masonry carried coffered panels. A central pediment bearing a demi-lune window with small 'porthole' windows either side completed the façade. The only applied ornamentation, apart from exaggerated keystones above the windows, was a couple of small swags in the peak of the pediment. Surmounting the roof of this entrance block was an unusual hexagonal, louvred ventilator having a flat top with scalloped edges. From the centre of this, arose a mast (a flagpole?).

Unfortunately, the external grandeur was not matched by the interior. The doors on either side of the pay-box opened directly into the auditorium, a long, perfectly rectangular hall under a pitched roof with exposed roof trusses crudely fabricated from iron girders, more suited to industrial premises than a cinema. The side walls carried pilasters to support the roof trusses and between these, shallow ventilation ducts were placed. The screen was flanked by a couple of Tuscan pillars, echoing those at the entrance and forming part of the proscenium, which bore a couple of cherubs. Apart from these, I believe there was no other decoration or ornamentation, save a moulding running along the tops of the walls and round the pilasters. There was a vestigial stage, about five feet high, which protruded slightly into the auditorium. It could have been no more than four or five feet in depth, perhaps big enough for a soloist or two. Viewing from the front rows of seats was an uncomfortable neck-aching experience owing to the screen being placed so high. There were exit doors either side of the stage.

Seating capacity at opening was quoted as 650 on a single, quite steeply-raked floor, the seating being in three blocks with aisles running from the entrance doors down to the screen. It is said that the plans incorporated provision for a balcony to be added at a later date. This knowledge, taken with a later (and what I maintain was an inaccurate) seating figure of 800 has led to the conclusion that a balcony had indeed been erected. Not so, I'm afraid. The **Electric Pavilion/Pavilion/Gaumont** never had a balcony; the seating was only ever on a single floor, although certain structural alterations carried out in a refurbishment forty years later gave the appearance of a balcony. A number of factors militated against the erection of a balcony: (a) it could only be of very limited seating capacity; to give

reasonable sightlines, a balcony has to be stepped and the building did not really have sufficient height to accommodate a balcony of more than about two or three rows of seats and (b) it is unclear how access could be provided without considerable structural alteration, space at the front of the building being very restricted. Throughout the cinema's life, the only way of accessing the upper level of the building was by a spiral iron staircase installed in the left-hand shop unit, this to enable access to the projection suite.

THE TOILETS

These seem to have been an afterthought, as they were not situated within the main structure. On a long, very narrow triangular strip of waste ground to the right of the building, a single-storey, flat-roofed extension adjoined the auditorium with doors set in the right-hand wall and rows of seats in the right-hand block eliminated so as to provide access. The Gents was about one-third of the way down and the Ladies about two-thirds of the way down the auditorium. These facilities were extremely cramped (and also very smelly!). The problem was (a) their location and (b) that the doors were hinged on the screen side and opened into the auditorium. This meant that every time one of the doors was opened, a shaft of light streamed across the auditorium, distracting attention from the film. To those using these facilities, it could also be embarrassing, as many of the audience knew exactly where you were going or had come from!

Heating was by means of hot water radiators placed around the walls (it was always nice and warm in there) and a gas engine in the basement generated electricity.

As the town's only purpose-built cinema, the **Pavilion** had no significant competition. It could have been this that attracted two business partners from Nottingham, a Mr GV Hutton and a Mr EC Shapeero to purchase the **Kettering Electric Pavilion** in 1919, it thus becoming part of the Shapeero Circuit. (I believe Mr Hutton was in the ladies' clothing business and Mr Shapeero was an optician.) A year later, competition reared its ugly head in the form of the **Empire** and the **Victoria Hall**, both of which opened in 1920. The **Pavilion** continued for another eight years under Mr Shapeero's guidance. By 1928 Mr Hutton seems to have faded from the picture and Mr Shapeero's health had begun to decline. It is said that this was the reason he sold twelve cinemas from his chain to Denman (Midlands) Cinemas Limited, a subsidiary of the Gaumont British Picture Corporation, the transaction taking place in March of that year. At this time, Gaumont was purchasing cinemas all over the country to provide outlets for the films they were making and distributing. This exercise was undertaken rather rashly, with seemingly little regard as to quite what sort of buildings they were acquiring, as many of the properties were small, elderly and outdated (embryonic flea-pits?) but as long as they kept the weather out, had seats and could show a film, then that was good enough, because exhibition was where the most money was to be made. This policy of buying any old rubbish was to have serious repercussions in later years. However, in 1929, Gaumont redeemed themselves somewhat by acquiring the mighty Provincial Cinematograph Theatres chain, which had large imposing properties in important towns and cities (as well as its own fair share of dross!).



The Pavilion rebranded as the Gaumont

To place their stamp of ownership on the **Pavilion**, Gaumont removed the boards bearing the words **Kettering Electric Pavilion** from the front of the building and installed lettering in the masonry panels above the shops and entrance, reading **GAUMONT PAVILION GAUMONT** (so there would be absolutely no doubt as to who was running the show then!). At night, the name panels were illuminated by three floodlights. A vertical sign was erected on either side of the cinema, angled towards the street and spelled **Pavilion** in red neon. A short closure took place in November 1929 for sound equipment to be installed, utilising both the sound-on-disc and sound-on-film systems. At this time there would have been no problem in obtaining product as the Gaumont film studios were busy churning out films for their chain of cinemas to show. Further competition came in 1936 when Oscar Deutsch's beautiful **Odeon** opened in September, followed in December by Cohen and Rafer's magnificent **Regal** [later **Granada**]. Two years on from this and more competition in the form of the **Savoy** presented itself. By now, in comparison with its modern art-deco competitors, the **Pavilion** was decidedly the poor relation and soldiered on through the Second World War. The presence of American airfields in the vicinity and the American army being billeted in the town would have provided patronage to ensure good houses.



US troops marching through Kettering with the Odeon in background

My memories of the **Pavilion** go back to the years immediately following the Second World War when, like many other cinemas, the **Pavilion** was looking rather sad and sorry for itself, having suffered six (and looking more like eighteen or nineteen) years of neglect. The cream painted façade was dirty and stained. The shop units had been taken back into cinema use, the right hand one serving as the manager's office and the left hand one as a storeroom. The shop windows had been obliterated with brown paint up to a height of about eight feet, leaving a gap at the top for daylight to enter.

An entry and exit policy was now in force – entry through the doors to the left of the pay-box and exit through those on the right – and woe betide anyone who tried to reverse this! I suppose it meant that they needed to employ only one usherette instead of two. Having entered through the doors, a small space totally devoid of light was encountered once the door had closed behind one. This space was formed of yards and yards of heavy dark brown velvet curtaining material. Having fought one's way through these, one was in a spacious rear cross-aisle. In his book *Let's go to the Pictures*, Maurice Thornton described how the seating went right up to the back wall; however, I would contend that at some time two or three rows of seats were removed to form this cross-aisle, which provided a more discreet and less distracting way of patrons accessing the toilets from, or exiting the left-hand side of the hall. Or perhaps more stringent fire regulations had come into force. Another curtained 'vestibule' covered the exit doors further along the aisle.

Gaumont seemed to like the colour brown. Not only was the lettering on the front of the building brown and that of the obscuring paint of the shop front windows, the interior was decorated entirely in a dark chocolate brown shade (OK for hiding nicotine stains, I suppose). To refer to the auditorium as a dark hole would be about right; the modest lighting was almost non-existent, possibly because the image on the screen, whilst in reasonable focus, was not of the brightest. Even the house lights, which were little more than domestic fittings suspended high amongst the roof trusses, only slightly dispelled the general gloom. Oh and whilst on a theme of brown, the screen tabs were brown velvet, illuminated by red footlights. I cannot remember any prosceni-

um as such. There seemed to be no pillars or cherubs visible, as reported by Mr Thornton, just the screen tabs and the screen. Perhaps both of these had been moved forward as they both sat right at the front of the stage. In spite of all this, the 'Pav' had good sound, was warm, comfortable and relatively clean (no mice etc running about). Older people in the town always spoke of the 'Pav' with great affection, although we youngsters did not hold it in such great esteem.

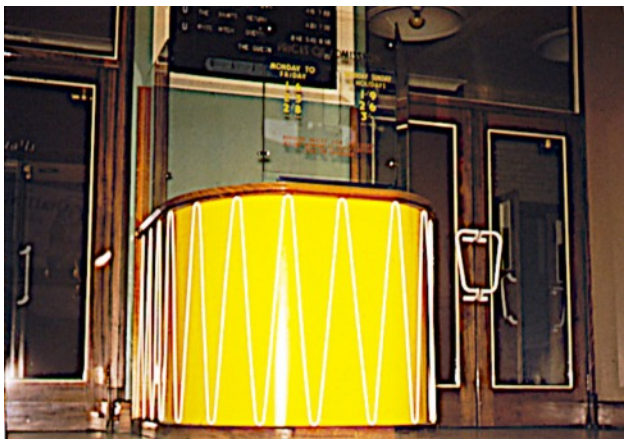
One of the worst features of the **Pavilion** during the last two years or so before the refurbishment was the habit the commissionaire had of marching down the aisle about five or ten minutes before the end of the programme and throwing open the exit doors on either side of the screen. These doors opened directly on to a narrow road, Wadcroft, at the rear. At night or at five o'clock on a winter's afternoon, this did not matter too much but late on a summer afternoon, it was a disaster. The resulting influx of light all but obliterated the image on the screen, thus ruining what was usually the climax of the main feature. Whether this was done so as to urge the audience to leave by the back entrance, or to help clear the smoky atmosphere, or just out of sheer bloody-mindedness, I never knew.

Sometime after Easter in 1953, my grandfather told me of a rumour that the 'Pav' was to close. I was aghast! "What! They can't close a cinema!" But they could and did and to add insult to injury, they closed it on my birthday, Wednesday 2 September. A day or so later, I walked past the now closed **Pavilion**, which looked really forlorn and forgotten. The stills frames had gone, the iron latticework gates leant drunkenly inwards, dirt and rubbish had begun to accumulate in the shop doorways and the entrance... Oh dear. A few days after this, a section of the pavement outside was fenced off and some building work had begun. The shop fronts were ripped out and the resulting voids bricked up, each side incorporating a door and a row of reeded glass windows at the top. The upper masonry remained unaltered except for the removal of the word **Pavilion** from the central panel. The Gaumont lettering was painted white as were the two small swags in the pediment and the keystones above the windows. The rest of the masonry was painted dove grey. Two sets of double doors surmounted by fanlights were installed in the entrance, flanked by attractive hardwood panels. Gone was the mosaic panel across the threshold and the six white marble steps, to be replaced by four rather steep steps all in cream terrazzo. Gone also was the strange ventilator on the roof and the vertical red neon signs. A small marquee was installed where there had been none before, outlined top and bottom in pink neon with lettering across the front spelling **Gaumont**, inset with blue neon.



The Gaumont Kettering after the 1953 revamp

At the top of the steps sat a slightly less-cramped modern pay-box, with new double doors on either side. Through these was a foyer which, whilst it ran the width of the building, was only about six or so feet deep. There was a sweet kiosk on the left-hand side, whilst at the right-hand side stood a trough containing plants coiling up white ropes and, standing on the floor, a large tub containing that icon of the 50s – a rubber plant. A further set of double doors either side gave entry to the auditorium. A small G-Plan sofa sat against the wall between the two sets of doors. Some small diabolo wall lights completed the contemporary 50s theme.

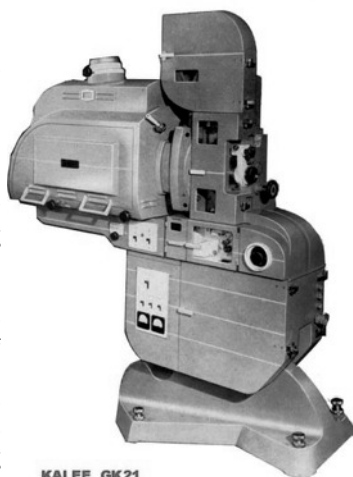


The new paybox, foyer and kiosk at the Gaumont Kettering – complete with rubber plants



The re-vamped auditorium at the Gaumont Kettering

In the auditorium, a really magnificent job had been done and a superb, beautiful, small cinema had been created. A false ceiling had been installed directly beneath the roof trusses, following the contours of the lower beams – flat across the centre, sloping down slightly at the sides to meet the side walls on top of the original moulding there. Two gently curving splay walls had been erected either side of the screen, each with double exit doors leading to the original exit doors in the back wall. The whole of the interior was now painted in soft dove grey and tabs, in the same colour with a silver fleck, covered the screen, extending round the splay walls to where they met the side walls. A slot in the false ceiling a short distance in front of the tabs accommodated the tab lighting and the spot for the ice cream saleslady, whose designated place was at the right-hand side of the screen. Elsewhere in the ceiling, downlighters provided the house lights. The tabs were usually bathed in pale lilac (Cinemoid No 36 perhaps?), whilst on rarer occasions, acid yellow was used and, on extremely rare occasions, a rather virulent emerald green. New seating in scarlet had been installed, numbering 550. There was new carpet throughout in dark grey. GB-Kalee 21s now had pride of place in the projection room and the screen, in its original position, was now equipped with variable masking and sitting on the original stage. Pictures were now shown with wonderful crispness and brightness. Some of the front rows of seats had been removed so that viewing from here was more pleasant and less of a neck-aching ordeal, the first rows now being slightly further back and higher up. The new wall, which had been erected between the auditorium



A GK21 projector with 'elephant's foot' base

and the new foyer, reached a height greater than that of the foyer ceiling. This wall was nicely capped off and when viewed from the stalls, certainly gave the appearance of a balcony. However hard I searched, I could find no way up to this 'balcony', short of a ladder and climbing over the front of the wall. Furthermore, the board on the pay-box gave only three tiers and prices of seating: Front Stalls, Centre Stalls and Rear Stalls – no mention of a Circle or Balcony. I then realised that this new foyer was nothing more than the old rear cross-aisle 'boxed-in' and that above the foyer ceiling was a sort of inaccessible no-man's land. Although the toilets had been stripped, re-equipped and redecorated (same dove grey colour as everywhere else – Rank must have bought a job lot) they were still constrained by the original dimensions of the extension and were still very cramped, although slightly less smelly. The problem with the doors opening into the auditorium remained.

THE GRAND (LOW KEY) REOPENING.



The reopening night of the Gaumont Kettering – 25 September 1953

I can remember seeing absolutely no publicity for this event. Three weeks and four days after closing, the 'Pav', now most definitely the Gaumont, reopened. The film selected for the reopening was *Genevieve*. I had read about cinema openings and how in years gone by it was usual to have the stars of the opening film on hand to cut the ribbon. So, OK, the star of the film was Genevieve and sure enough the car was in the town that night. I suspect it had been brought on the back of a lorry from Pinewood and hidden somewhere in the town until the evening, when it was driven in triumph along the High Street. Now who was riding in it? One of the stars of the film? Kay Kendall? John Gregson? Dinah Sheridan? Kenneth More? Or all four maybe? That would have been really exciting but no, none of the above. Being driven in the car and wearing a rented fur coat was a twenty-year-old lady of whom very few of us had taken much notice at that point. She was certainly not in the film being shown. It was Joan Collins. Who???, we asked. Now, by 1953, Miss Collins had appeared in nine or ten films and had worked her way up the cast lists from being an uncredited extra in 1951 (and a Rank starlet to boot) to being what I would describe as a featured player, certainly not yet a star and a long way from the international superstar that she was to become in later years. Still, she was being promoted by Rank and I suppose they



thought that this would be a good way of getting her more widely known and would garner some useful publicity, albeit in a scruffy little one-horse town in the East Midlands. Maurice Thornton described the street outside the theatre that night as being jammed with crowds of people. The photograph that appeared in the local newspaper did not convey this impression. The empty car stood outside the theatre. A commissioner stood either side of the entrance with the manager nearby in his evening dress suit. About twenty or thirty people were standing around ... and a teenage boy was leaning against his bicycle. And that was it. Perhaps the press photographer had turned up after the opening party had gone in and most of the crowd had dispersed.

So, it was good luck to the Gaumont and to all who sail in her. Unfortunately, the voyage didn't last long, for six years later it closed on 10 October 1959. The usual excuses were trotted out by Rank, "lack of support" and "managerial difficulties" and so on. With their usual arrogance, Rank seemed to blame everyone but themselves. Rank had long known that the Gaumont release was weak, especially since the advent of the CMA and they did nothing about it. The booking manager for both circuits had previously fulfilled the same function within Odeon and possibly out of a sense of loyalty, seemed to favour Odeon with by far the majority of the best releases. Added to this, the general image of Gaumont properties was not very good, as most of their cinemas appeared to be small, elderly, unattractive, neglected buildings, of which there were many. This was the legacy of the wild, indiscriminate, buying spree of the late 1920s. How much more pleasant it was for the cinema-goer, (and more profitable for the company, too) to go to see a blockbuster film at a large modern Odeon than to be put off by having to go to a small Gaumont 'fleapit'. This poor image and paucity of seats resulted in producers and distributors dictating to Rank where they would allow their films to be shown, threatening to go to the opposition if Rank did not accede to their wishes. They would however back down and allow a film to be shown in a Gaumont in those areas where there was no Odeon but one of the large 1930s Gaumonts, eg the Gaumont State Kilburn, or Finchley etc.

As to the 'managerial difficulties' at Kettering, I'm not sure whether this was just the difficulty in attracting a suitable candidate to the job, bolshie staff, or whether it was a euphemism for something else... I'll let others decide what that might have been. I would imagine that managing a small elderly Gaumont theatre out in the sticks in the late 1950s was a thankless task.

Once closed, Kettering Gaumont was swiftly demolished and a branch of Boots the Chemists quickly arose on the site. Having given their word that the Odeon would not close, Rank reneged on this and closed the Odeon one year later, again quoting lack of support, leaving the town with no Rank outlet. What a pity the words ascribed to Louis B Mayer concerning the huge crowds at the funeral of the universally-hated boss of Columbia Pictures, Harry Cohn, did not fall upon the ears of one Joseph Arthur Rank:

"You see, give the people what they want and they will come!"

Obviously, Rank did not give the people of Kettering what they wanted; they made no effort to find out what it may have been and so, the people didn't come. To highlight Rank's inept management style, the Granada, usually showing the ABC release, carried on with films for another 14 years and the Savoy for a further 37 years after the Odeon's closure.

Colour photos on pages 9 & 10 from a set of stereoscopic slides donated to the CTA Archive by Carl Chesworth – see p10 Bulletin 51/5.



The Odeon and the Granada (ex Regal) Kettering in the 1950s

HULL BOMBED CINEMA

80 years since bomb dropped on National Picture Theatre

On the evening of 18 March 2021 it was the 80th anniversary of the bombing that destroyed the National Picture Theatre on Beverley Road in Hull. The audience were enjoying Charlie Chaplin in *The Great Dictator* when the air-raid siren sounded. Cinema-goers moved to the back of the auditorium, under the gallery and into the foyer. A quick glance outside showed that bombs were raining down close by and people decided they were safer inside. A short time later, at 9:50pm, a 1,000 kg bomb exploded close to the back of the cinema, resulting in the destruction of the screen and the auditorium. Amazingly the robust construction of the gallery and foyer protected everyone and no one was killed or injured. The foreman had a narrow escape. He had been to the back to bank up the boiler and had just returned to the stalls when the back wall and the screen were blown in.



Remains of foyer, stairs etc

The owner of the National ensured the name continued by taking out a lease on the Rialto on the opposite side of the road, next door to Stepney Station. People still remember visiting the National in that location. Subsequently, the bombed site was hidden behind an advert hoarding and largely forgotten. In 1999 the National Civilian World War II Memorial Trust was established to preserve the ruins, provide a heritage site and education facility and create a venue for activities and a peace garden. English Heritage recognised the special character of the site and it was listed as being of historic interest.



National Picture Theatre Hull, from rear with scaffolding

Fewer than 20 World War II bombed buildings survive in England in their ruined state. Most are preserved churches or military buildings; the National is special for being an 'everyday' civilian building. Cinemas were important during the war as sources of illustrated news as well as entertainment. Today the site is owned by the Council and forms part of its strategy to refurbish key buildings and sites in Beverley Road and encourage local activities and businesses. Thanks to lottery players, funds have been made available to stabilise the remains of the National and develop exciting plans for the next stage of the project. Very soon we should all hear whether further funding will enable the next stage of the project to progress.

Hull National Civilian World War II Memorial Trust Press Release
sent in by Hilary Briers

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Mike Whitcombe and Harry Rigby

Mention to a friend that you're going to wile away a few hours at the Ritz or the Picturedrome and they would automatically assume you were going to the cinema. But tell them you were off to the **Black Cat** or the **White Rose** and they would think you were about to spend an hour or two at the pub – and yet they would be wrong. For the **Black Cat** and the **White Rose** are just two of the more exotically named cinemas that have graced British High Streets over the past one hundred years.

A couple of months ago an item appeared on the 'Old Cinema Buildings' Facebook group about unusual cinema names. There were around a dozen examples and on seeing it, Bulletin editor Harry Rigby thought he knew a few more. He diligently did a little research and his findings are printed on page 16. It doesn't claim to be comprehensive, so if any readers think they know of one we've missed, please let us know.

Nowadays most cinemas not owned by independent operators are known by the name of the brand that owns them – Odeon, Cineworld or Vue, for instance – but in the heyday of cinema-going, some eighty years ago, this wasn't always the case. Even mighty chains such as ABC would name their sites Regal or Savoy, which suggested grandeur. Smaller operators, though, would often be far more imaginative, naming their picture palaces after famous people, places or even objects.



The Black Cat Glasgow in July 2009 {50804}

Take the **Black Cat**, named in the first paragraph, which really did exist. Opened in the Bridgeton district of Glasgow in 1921, it seated 893 patrons. It closed as a cinema in 1955 and was later used by the BBC as a TV Studio until 1970. It was demolished in May 2015 after being used by a company called James McDade, who manufactured cardboard boxes.



The [White] Elephant Glasgow in September 2009 {50802}

Naming a cinema after an animal long believed to be a bringer of luck can be said to be a clever marketing ploy. But to name a cinema a white elephant, a term traditionally used to denote a possession that the owner cannot dispose of and whose cost, particularly that of maintenance, is out of proportion to its usefulness, is not. But that's exactly what the public of Glasgow did when a cinema owner asked them to name his latest cinema. The year was 1927 and Albert Ernest

Pickard (1874-64) had just opened an entertainment complex on the Kilmarnock Road in the Shawlands district of Glasgow, comprising of a dance hall, restaurant, car park and a 1,900-capacity cinema designed by Harry Barnes (1870-1935). Pickard was an eccentric showman, millionaire, philanthropist and publicist who believed all publicity was good publicity. He was therefore quite happy when Glaswegians, through a newspaper competition, chose the name **White Elephant** for his latest venture, going as far as to have a bas-relief sculpture of an elephant mounted on the façade at the top of the building. In 1934 when Pickard sold the site to Scottish cinema mogul Alexander Boyne King (1888-1973), the cinema was immediately renamed as simply the **Elephant**. It remained known by this name until it closed in 1960, when the whole complex was converted into shops.

Cinemas named after monarchs are not as common as might be supposed for a nation that has stubbornly held on to an antiquated belief in a hereditary monarchy. There's been a few cinemas called King's – such as the 1,600-capacity King's Oldham (1911-66) and the 1,485-seater King's Bristol (1911-76, demolished 1981) – and even the odd Queen – the 1,413 capacity Queen's Newcastle (1913-80, demolished 1983) and the Queen's Wolverhampton (1914-59, demolished 1978) both spring to mind – but none that mention the name of the monarch preceded by their title. For instance the New Victoria in Bradford, which opened in 1930 and boasted 3,318 seats, making it the third largest in England, doesn't specifically refer to Queen Victoria, who once ruled an empire that covered a quarter of the globe.

The name of a well-known public figure closely associated with the area in which the cinema is situated has often been used by an enterprising cinema owner wanting an instant connection with his audience. Sometimes the association is clear, occasionally it needs a little imagination or a nudge to remember the area's history.



The Brontë Haworth in October 2003 {33700}

One of the most recognisable examples is the **Brontë** cinema in Haworth, where Charlotte (1816-55), Emily (1818-48) and Ann (1820-49) wrote most of their novels while living at Haworth Parsonage, where their father was parson at the chapel of St Michael and All Angels. Many of their stories – *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and the *Tenant of Wetherby Hall* – have been adapted for the screen but alas can no longer be shown at the **Brontë** cinema as it closed in July 1956. It had opened during the silent era on 21 April 1923 with *Mr Wu* starring Matheson Lang and boasted 778 seats in the circle and stalls. The proscenium was at the front of the building with the projection box located beneath the balcony. There was a shop to the north of the entrance, which first sold sweets and then became Miss Betty Dawson's hairdresser's until Mr Pickle, a shoe repairer, took it over. In 1961 a Mr Snowden bought the building for £3,000 and used it for his non-ferrous scrap business. He recently retired and the building now stands empty.

Errol Flynn was one of the greatest heartthrobs Hollywood has ever produced. His swashbuckling roles and tempestuous off-screen antics make him an icon even today, sixty years after his death and led to the famous phrase, "In Like Flynn". In the mid-1930s, before leaving for Hollywood, he spent a year and a half as an actor at the Northampton Repertory Theatre. In honour of this, the single-screen

Errol Flynn Filmhouse in Northampton opened on 20 June 2013, boasting 90 luxury seats. Business was so good a second screen, with 83 seats, was soon opened. Curiously, it was rebranded in September 2019; it's now known unglamorously as the Northampton Filmhouse.



The Wellesley Wellington in August 2003 {17960}

At first glance, the Wellesley cinema in Wellington, Somerset, doesn't seem to be inspired by anyone. But as any schoolboy will tell you, the small west country town of Wellington is the place from which the title was derived and Wellesley is the family name of Arthur, otherwise known as the Duke of Wellington (1769-1852), victor against Napoleon at Waterloo and twice prime minister of Great Britain. Opening on 12 July 1937 with *Dimples* starring Shirley Temple, the Wellesley was designed by the talented Wessex architect Edward de Wilde Holding with a 472 capacity in circle and stalls. It remains open to this day and is universally recognised as a rare example of a 1930s single-screen cinema that is virtually untouched.



The Drake Odeon Plymouth, shortly after closure in 1999 {5535} [DS]

From historical figures who fought on land to those who won fame and fortune on the high sea. The Drake cinema in Plymouth at Derry's Cross and Union Street, was named after Sir Francis Drake (1540-96), the famous seafarer, explorer, slave trader, privateer and the City's mayor. Designed by Leonard Allen and built by 20th Century Fox to show off their 70mm presentations, it opened in June 1958 with 1,639 seats in circle and stalls. In March 1961 it was sold to Odeon, who kept the huge replica of the 'Golden Hind' above the entrance doors. Tripled in 1975, it was closed in October 1999 when a Vue opened on a leisure park in the City. Demolished in 2002, the site is now home to Grosvenor Casino, who have retained the Golden Hind replica in their frontage.

Bearing in mind how beautifully designed so many of our cherished cinemas are, it's no surprise that elegant – and, it must be said, impressive sounding – architectural terms have occasionally been used to name a cinema. One such example is the long-demolished Ionic cinema in Golders Green. The term Ionic is one of three column styles builders used in ancient Greece (the others being Doric and Corinthian). More slender and ornate than the other two, Ionic columns have scroll shaped ornaments, which sit at the top of the column shaft. The original Ionic cinema, designed by Major William

James King (1878-1965), boasted a façade of an ancient temple with four Ionic columns supporting a pediment on top. This obviously gave the thousand seat cinema its eventual name (it originally opened in April 1913 under the uninspired name the Golders Hill Picture Palace). In 1975 the cinema was closed and demolished after the site was sold to Sainsbury's, who were only allowed to construct a supermarket if the build contained a cinema. George Coles and Company were commissioned to design a first floor, single-screen cinema with a capacity of 652. *The Four Musketeers* became the first film to be shown at the new Ionic on 25 August 1975. In later years the cinema was rebranded Cannon Ionic and ABC Ionic before it closed on 10 September 1999 with the Stanley Kramer directed *Eyes Wide Shut*, starring Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman.

Other cinemas named after architectural terms include the Doric Newmarket, designed by Edgar J Simmons, the Moderne, Bournemouth, architect Edward de Wilde Holding, who also designed the Wellesley already mentioned and the futuristic looking Rota Cinema in Denton, the first cinema designed by Henry F Elder (1909-96). Sadly, though, the Doric, which opened in March 1937, closed after just 27 years and the Rota was demolished to make way for housing a mere 23 years after opening in April 1936. Only the Moderne, an art deco masterpiece, which opened in October 1935 and closed as a cinema in May 1983 when it went over to bingo, is still standing. Since closing as a bingo hall in 2008, it's been owned by the Bournemouth Council of Churches.

Some odd sounding names for cinemas soon make sense when the history of the site is examined. The Buffalo Cinema in Ashington, Northumberland, for instance, was named after the Independent Order of Buffaloes, whose main meeting hall was converted into the Buffalo Picture Palace in 1910. (The Buffaloes were founded in 1822 by a fraternity of stagehands from Drury Lane Theatre, who named themselves after a popular song of the day, called *We'll Chase the Buffaloes*.) By the 1930s the cinema was known simply as The Buffalo. It closed on August 26 1967 and was converted to bingo; it's since been demolished. The Lion cinema in Leytonstone, which only operated between 1912-18, was named not after a fierce jungle animal but the Lion Sanitary Steam Laundry Co Ltd, who owned the building before it was converted into a cinema.



The Zonita Ampthill in August 2004 {44379}

Other odd-sounding cinema names seem to make no sense – although there must have been a reason initially. Take the Zonita cinema in Ampthill, Bedfordshire. The word 'zonita' doesn't even feature in the dictionary so what it means is a real mystery. The cinema itself opened in 1938 with over 600 seats and was built by Cox's Cinemas of Biggleswade, who sold the site to R Chetham in 1952. It closed in 1960 and after spells as a retail outlet and a snooker hall it was demolished in 2005. A Waitrose supermarket now occupies the site.

When the ABC/Ritz Hastings closed in October 1971, Don Smith Enterprises Ltd decided to fill the hole in the market and build a single-screen, first-floor cinema above their bingo hall in Priory Street. On 24 August 1974 they opened the 200-seat Penguin cinema with a reissue of *The Guns of Navarone* starring Gregory Peck. Just why they called it the Penguin is anyone's guess. What is certain, though, is it soon failed. Unable to show first-run releases, it closed in January 1977 midway through a week's run of *Confessions of a Sexy Photographer* and *Versatile Lovers*. (Photo on next page.)



The Penguin Hastings [49944] [DS]



The Magnet Bristol in March 2006 [44607]

The Magnet cinema, located on Newfoundland Street in the St Paul's district of Bristol, was another cinema with an unusual name. It opened with 500 seats in 1914 and was built by Magnet Cinema Theatre Ltd. They sold it in October 1921 to WS Chamberlain. It was a popular site until a slum clearance of surrounding streets moved the clientele to the suburbs, forcing it to close in 1937 when the City of Bristol already boasted sixty cinemas. A shop next door to the Magnet sold pig's trotters – a 1930s substitute for popcorn – which patrons would buy and munch throughout the film.



The Rock Mansfield in September 2006 [33888]

Another cinema to open in 1914 was the 760-seater Rock in Mansfield – it must have been the year for odd names. Located on Skerry Hill and the corner of Montague Street, The Rock Picture House and Variety Theatre (as it was originally called) opened on 24 October 1914. It was taken over by Gaumont in March 1928 and did reasonable business until the Rank Organisation closed it on 20 October 1956. The last double bill was *The Man Who Knew Too Much* with James Stewart and *The Good Beginning* with John Fraser. Before it was demolished in July 2010, it was used for retail. When our Bulletin editor visited in 2006, it was an aquarium and pet food store. The owner allowed Harry inside but said he couldn't take photos of the well-preserved interior because of "security issues". Harry adds: "The owner also tried to kid me that the ventilation grilles were some sort of early stereo system!"



The Orient Ayr in July 2009 [16057]

As places to escape reality and luxuriate in fantasy, cinemas can be forgiven for bearing exotic names. One of the most exotic sounding names is Orient, which has been used for several sites. One such is the Orient on Main Street in Ayr. This was designed by Albert V Gardner (1884-1944), a truly talented cinema architect who formed a partnership with the legendary William R Glen, called Gardner & Glen, until Glen left for London in 1929 to work for Associated British Cinemas. His partner's departure, though, didn't hinder Gardner's career and in the 1930s he received many commissions for new cinemas, including the Orient, as well as the refurbishment and enlargements of existing ones. Gardner designed the Orient with a Moorish-style influenced frontage and interior, which included fake, miniature plaster buildings complete with minarets alongside the side of the auditorium. The building contractors were Finlay & McGeechan for a Mr John McAlister and it opened in 1932, seating 1,648 in circle and stalls. Excluding furnishings, the cost of the build was £12,000. In 1954 CinemaScope was installed by placing a screen just in front of the former proscenium area. The new proscenium was designed in an art deco style and during the installation all the Moorish trappings inside the auditorium were removed. The cinema closed in 1983 to go over to bingo. When that closed, the building was briefly a night club called Babylon. Today it sits empty and is on the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland, although it was never listed.



The Danilo/Essoldo Redditch in March 2006 [33605]

Several well-known names, both of cinemas and cinema chains, are a contraction of several words. The most famous example is Essoldo, which at one time was Britain's third largest cinema circuit with 160 sites. It was presided over by the legendary Sol Sheckman (1891-1963) who used the first two letters of his wife's name (Esther), the first three letters of his name (Solomon) and the first two letters of his daughter's name (Dorothy) to create Essoldo. Walter Lawson, who began in the cinema trade in 1914, did something similar when it came to naming his firm. He combined the first three letters from his first and last name to form a title for his company, Wallaw Pictures Limited, which ran eleven cinemas in the north east of England, including the Wallaw at Blyth.

Jacey Cinemas was a little different. Jacey was run by Joseph Cohen, who controlled around fifty cinemas, including many news theatres after he bought out the Monseigneur Group in the 1950s. The name Jacey was a play on the sound of his initials: JC.



The Barcliff Denton shortly before demolition in 2002 [CC]

Family was important to Clifford Ogle, a Stockport-based builder, who built and operated the Barcliff, Denton and the Marcliff, Stockport. He named both cinemas in honour of his daughters by combining the first three letters of their Christian names with the first five letters of his. The Marcliff, a 764-seater that opened on 12 October 1937, was named after daughter Marjorie, born in 1932 while the Barcliff, which opened on 10 November 1939 with 901 seats, was named after a second daughter, Barbara, who was born in 1934. The Marcliff, which was taken over by Warwick Cinemas in 1949 and renamed the Warwick, shut in 1954; it is now used by a car hire company. The Barcliff closed in 1962 when it was sold to Sidney Wild, who converted it to bingo; it was demolished in 2002.

Mortimer Dent, born Meyers Abrahams, was chairman of the Danilo circuit, which operated cinemas called Danilo in Brierly Hill, Redditch, Cannock, Longbridge and Stourbridge. The origin of his company's name is a mystery. Some say he named it after the famous music hall comedian, Dan Leno, who he admired. Others say the name was chosen by Dent's wife, who liked the character Count Danilo in Franz Lehár's opera *The Merry Widow*. However, Peter Lea, who is writing a book about Dent and the Danilo circuit, which is due out later this year, interviewed Dent's children and they say their mother, a religious woman, suggested Danilo as it's Hebrew (not Polish as often claimed) for "As God Is My Judge". Dent opened his first site in 1936 and his last in 1940, selling his company in 1946 to SM Super Cinemas.



The Ben Hur Stepney in April 2006 {15124}

It's strange that cinemas haven't been named after the films they show – *Casablanca* would make a wonderful name for a cinema. About the only site that has a film title for its name is the Ben Hur in White Horse Road, Stepney but even that has nothing to do with either the 1925 Ramon Navarro silent or the 1959 Charlton Heston sound version of Lew Wallace's famous story. The Ben Hur cinema opened under the name of the Palacedium in 1913 as a 500-seat independent operated by Messrs Prideaux & Son. By 1917 the proprietor and projectionist was Henry Ben Solomon, a former market trader who changed his name by deed poll to Ben Hur after defeating a bare knuckle boxing champion in a fight. This led to a stage act called 'The World's Strongest Man', which earned Hur enough money to buy the cinema to which he gave his name. After it closed on 6 May 1962 – the last films were *Jet Pilot*, starring John Wayne and Fred MacMurray's *Quantez* – it went over to bingo before becoming a snooker hall. It was demolished in 2008, when housing replaced it.



The Avion Aldridge in April 2007 {1239}

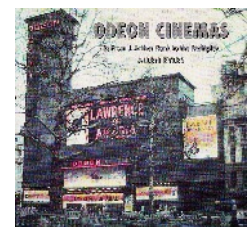
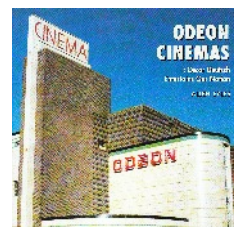
A romantic-looking cinema with a romantically sounding name is rare but one that fits the bill is the former Avion Super Cinema in the Walsall suburb of Aldridge. Designed in a Streamline Moderne style with 1,050 seats by Birmingham-based architect Roland Satchwell, who designed thirty other cinemas during his career, it looks like a cinema should – enticing curves and strong street presence – and even boasts a foreign and enticing name (it's French and means aeroplane). It opened on 26 September 1938 with a personal appearance by George Formby, who was there not only to perform the opening honours but also to promote his latest flick, *I See Ice*, which was the first night's entertainment. As a cinema, the Avion had a short history. It closed on 30 December 1967 but reopened immediately as a bingo hall. When Gala closed it on 1 August 2009 the building was put up for sale. JD Wetherspoon soon bought it and redesigned it, keeping the original name. They opened it as one of their tastefully refurbished pubs in June 2013.

The name given to a cinema is probably more important than the movies it shows. Any picture palace called the Majestic, Grand, Regent, Palace or the Regal immediately denotes grandeur even if the cinema is nothing more than a much-loved fleapit! Cinemas, after all, are all about dreams, romance, adventure and illusion and a name should reflect that. Although most cinemas today are called just plain Odeon or Cineworld, it's encouraging that many smaller independent cinemas, which have successfully weathered the decades, still retain names that instantly conjure up memories of being sat in a darkened auditorium, sharing a bag of sweets with the one you love.

Photos by Harry Rigby, except [DS] David Simpson & [CC] Carl Chesworth

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THE CINEMA NAMES LIST

ROYALTY

Corona
King's
Queen's
Prince's
Princess
Victoria
NuVic
Prince of Wales
Duke of York
Albert / Albert Hall

ARTISTS

Gainsborough
Rembrandt (Ewell) {13747}
Renoir (Bloomsbury, London) {12788}
Vandyck (Bristol) {21200}

LITERATURE

Brontë (Haworth) {33700}
Byron (Hucknall) {13428}
Shakespeare (London) {28286}
Shelley (Bournemouth)
Tennyson (Bradford) {38023}

PLACES / NAMES

Argosy
Austral [Australia] (Harpenden) {21894}
Bohemia
Canton (Cardiff) {18352}
Lochinvar (Longtown) {55726}
Maxime
Mayflower
Monseigneur
Negresco (Edenbridge) {38869}
Ohio
Orient / Oriental
Oxford
Paris
Picardy (Harlesden, London) {30105}
Riviera
Trafalgar (Greenwich, London) {19970}
Viking (Largs) {44375}
Welbeck (Newcastle upon Tyne) {36853}
Waterloo
Whiteladies (Bristol) {849}

FAMOUS

Beau Nash (Bath) {22388}
Boleyn (East Ham, London) {14651}
Drake (Plymouth) {5535}
Errol Flynn (Northampton) {41652}
Fellini's (Ambleside) {51456}



The Glyndwr Corwen in July 2014

Glyndwr (Corwen, North Wales) {45986}
Nelson
Wellesley (Wellington, Somerset) {17960}
Wellington (Stockport) {36714}
Zeffirelli's (Ambleside)
Zetland (Richmond, North Yorks) {3376}

FICTITIOUS

Ben Hur (Stepney, London) {15214}
Camelot (Newquay) {21244}
Godiva (Coventry) {37905}
Merlin
Orion
Robin Hood

NAME CONTRACTIONS / ANAGRAMS

Barcliff [Barbara & Clifford] {47638}
Essoldo [Esther, Solomon, Dorothy]
Jacey [JC]
Marcliff [Marjorie & Clifford] {50295}
Regors [Rogers] (Creswell) {44675}
Rosum [Rose Summers] (Walsall) {36855}



The Waldorf Birmingham in May 2006

Waldorf [Walford] (Birmingham) {37418}
Wallaw [Walter Lawson]
Wardona [Oliver Ward]

SURNAMES

Beaufort
Cavendish
Clifton
Grainger (Newcastle upon Tyne) {43990}
Grosvenor
Kavanagh (Herne Bay) {17248}
Montague (Dromore, NI) {55853}
Osborne (Manchester) {48347}
Robins
Romilly (Barry, South Wales) {21286}
Spicer (Sawston) {44486}

FIRST NAMES

Danilo
Dorothy / Dorothea (Llangollen) {32675}
Douglas (Milngavie) {50810}
George
Rodney (Wetherby) {3507}

ANIMALS

Black Cat (Glasgow) {50804}
Buffalo (Ashington) {44165}
Horse [Hospital] (Bloomsbury, London) {27186}
Lion (Leyton, London) {30716}
Penguin (Hastings) {49944}
Swan
[White] Elephant (Glasgow) {50802}
Zoo (Glasgow) {44098}

NATURE

Beech
Birks (Aberfeldy) {39010}
Daffodil (Cheltenham) {35654}
Egg (Bath) {44737}
Glen
Oak
Rookery (Birmingham) {40928}
Silver
White Rose (Cwmbran) {51390}

PLACES IN WHICH LOCATED

Breadalbane (Wick) {47201}
Brig (Filey) {3226}
Chandos (Buckingham) {27606}
Chequers (St Albans) {51159}
Chiltern (Beaconsfield) {14764}
Devonia
Gidlow (Wigan) {58482}
Maindee (Newport, South Wales) {7067}
Melbourne (Leicester) {33752}
Northwick (Worcester) {22572}
Splott (Cardiff) {18817}
Winton ... and many more

OBJECTS

Anvil (Sheffield) {27493}
Cabbage Hall (Liverpool) {33335}
Castle
Cube (Bristol) {44935}
Haven
Lido
Magnet
Radio
Rock
Triangle

ARCHITECTURE & BUILDINGS

CellB (Blaenau Ffestiniog) {55414}
Court- / Old Court- [-house]
Doric
Ionic
Modèrne
Pyramid (Sale) {2315}
Rota (Manchester) {41622}
Turret (Bodmin) {41060}

MISCELLANEOUS

Aaben
Ace
Albion
Avion (Aldridge) {1239}
Biograph (Victoria, London) {13048}
Carrick (Maybole) {51319}
Cosmo
Doon (Dalmellington) {59202}
Dreamland (Margate) {15123}
Electra
Excelda (Huddersfield) {48092}
Futurist
Hanbury (Bargoed) {28375}



The Hayweights Mussleburgh in March 2004

Hayweights (Mussleburgh) {44380}
Herga (Wealdstone, London) {17998}
Iveagh (Banbridge, NI) {43727}
Jam Jar (Whitley Bay) {43338}
Kinetone (Ormiston) {51287}
Lexi (Kensal Rise, London) {25925}
Natraj (Leicester) {47293}
Pilot (King's Lynn) {42467}
Pola (Welshpool) {23199}
Radion
Star & Shadow (Newcastle upon Tyne) {50254}
Tonic
Zonita (Amphill) {44379} ... and many more

WHAT'S NOT HERE!

I have been unable to find any UK cinemas named after composers, eg Bach, Handel, Wagner, Brahms & Liszt etc. There is a Mozart Kino in Salzburg, Austria and several Chopin theaters in the USA. There is a Haydn Kino in Vienna, Austria and a Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace in Sydney, Australia.

Note: I have given the Cinema Treasures reference (nnnn) where I believe there to be only the one UK example. Some names may fit into more than one category.

BEAU NASH PICTURE HOUSE, BATH – Part 2

By Ben Doman

...continued from last time

Emmanuel Harris was set to move to Chippenham for a new project (the Astoria, later Studios 1&2, Cannon and Reel cinema) and on 1 May 1930 he, along with Featherstone Witty and Alfred Taylor resigned. Their places were taken by John Maxwell (Director and Chairman of British International Pictures and Associated British Cinemas Ltd), John Pearce (Managing Director of ABC Cinemas) and Eric Lightfoot (ABC Company secretary). Thus the Beau Nash came under the control of Associated British Cinemas. Emmanuel Harris sold his theatres in Bristol (the Whiteladies and Triangle) to ABC around the same time but he held onto the Scala in Oldfield Park.

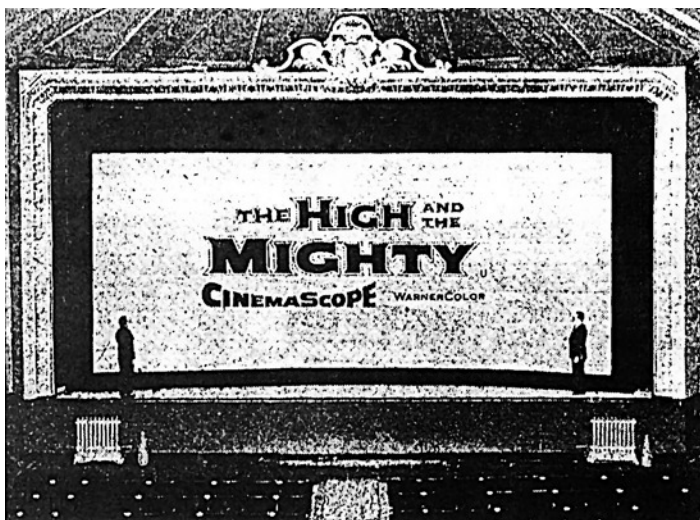
The registered office of the Beau Nash Cinema Company was moved to ABC Cinemas head office address at 30-31 Golden Square from 3 April 1933. Motions to start liquidation of the company were started on 16 July 1935 and the company's assets transferred to ABC when these procedures were completed on 18 December 1936.

At the end of the second world war, projectionist Malcolm Ford recalled that the cinema was hired by the Ministry of Defence, who had extensive offices in Bath, to show film of the concentration camps to new army recruits. The doors were locked to prevent anyone entering and no other staff apart from Malcolm, who was showing the film, were permitted to watch. He remarked that the films were extremely harrowing and several recruits were visibly shaken.



3D at the Beau Nash – Metroscopic in 1953 [4]

Alterations were made to the front stalls and balcony toilets in 1951. The dressing room to the right of the stage was adapted to a ladies' toilet. Around the same time, the Western Electric sound system was replaced with ABC's favoured system at the time, RCA. 3D came to the Beau Nash in June 1953 with the film *Metroscopic*.



Press advert for the first CinemaScope picture at the Beau Nash [4]

In preparation for the launch of CinemaScope films, plans were drawn up in December 1953 by David Esdaile & Co, via CJ Foster of ABC's architects' department, for alterations to the proscenium and stage end of the auditorium to allow for a wider screen. The niches at either side were removed, the exit door on the left and the ladies' toilet door on the right were moved a few feet further out to allow for the front line of the stage to extend outwards to the side walls. The central 25 feet of the proscenium arch was retained and new mouldings, made to match the original section, were added either side to extend the proscenium width to over 37 feet. A new 35' 3" by 15' curved screen was fitted within the enlarged opening. The orchestra pit was boarded over and the barriers removed. The alterations to the stage meant the loss of three rows of seats. Work commenced on overnight on Monday 6 December 1954.



The new CinemaScope screen had its debut on 18 January 1955 with the John Wayne film *The High and the Mighty*, being beaten once again by the Scala Oldfield park, showing *The Robe* 15 days previously. A picture [L] appeared in the *Bath Chronicle* showing Manager Mr ST Barontini (who had taken over in 1953) and Chief Projectionist Mr C Bennenworth stood either side of the stage inspecting the vast CinemaScope screen.

The Beau Nash projection team were featured in the ABC News of October 1964's *Meet the Chief* article. Readers were introduced to Chief John Petherwick, second projectionist M Ford (who later took over as Chief) and J Simpson, pictured in the projection room. John Petherwick had previously worked at the ABC Whiteladies cinema in Bristol as senior second projectionist. The team had been awarded most proficient operating crew in the South West and Wales ABC cinemas area and were pictured in the *Bath Chronicle* on Saturday 29 June 1963.

In 1965, plans were submitted to the planning officer for several improvements to the theatre, drawn up by ABC company architect CJ Foster. These included a part electrical re-wire, fitting of 'multi arm light fittings' (the ABC 'spider' type), new illuminated soffit over foyer area, improvements to the manager's office and a general re-decoration. The half landing to the balcony was enclosed and became part of the manager's office. It was noted in a letter from ABC house architect CJ Foster to the City engineer that this would not affect access to the balcony, as circle patrons were accommodated by the rear circle crossover, which connected the two rear doors from the circle to the two sets of stairs leading down to the street.

A new manager arrived at the Beau Nash in September 1966 in the shape of Mr Clive Jones, who transferred from the Palace Cinema Lancaster. Mr Jones stayed at the cinema until 1968, when he transferred to the ABC Cheltenham. He was replaced by Joseph Storer, who before moving into management was one of ABC's theatre organists. The cinema now listed the seating capacity as 1,037.

In July 1971 a report in the *Bath Chronicle* asked "What's on at the Beau Nash? When the bricklayers started to wall up the front of Bath's Beau Nash cinema, I thought it was a publicity stunt for a return screening of *The Nun's Story*. It turns out to be part of a £25,000 scheme to give the old place a touch of luxury...The scheme will turn a cinema tradition upside down. Instead of the posh 50p seats being in the circle, as now, they'll be downstairs in the stalls, renamed a luxury lounge. There will be more leg and elbow room – with only 500 seats instead of the existing 800. Circle seats will cost 40p, the existing price in the stalls..."



The theatre closed for two weeks on Sunday 12 December 1971 (last films *Dr Jekyll and Sister Hyde* and *Blood from the Mummy's Tomb* both [X] certificate), for the completion of ABC's 13th 'Luxury Lounge' conversion, first seen at the ABC Palace Lancaster in 1966. The front stalls toilets were closed and a new lobby was created at the rear of the stalls, losing three rows of seats. Cloakrooms lead off both sides of this lobby on to new ladies' and gents' toilets that were created in the former bricked-in street exits either end of the street foyer. On the outside, this wall then had poster frames mounted on it. New 'Columbia' seats from Dawson's seating, in a bronze and grey jaspé worsted velvet (bronze material with thin lines of grey threaded through) were installed in the stalls and circle by ABC's technical supply subsidiary Pathé Equipment and the seats staggered. New carpeting throughout was in the ABC house-style, red with a black geometric design. With the loss of the back three rows and improved legroom between rows, the stalls seating capacity dropped from 804 seats to 542 seats. The chandeliers were taken out and replaced with circular fittings with pin prick holes around the copper outside ring, one large over the centre of the stalls and four smaller ones over the balcony and rear stalls. Peach coloured satin tabs were hung on the stage, illuminated by floodlights mounted on the front of the balcony. Further floodlights mounted on the balcony front illuminated the semi-circular ceiling over the stage until a roof leak found them illuminating the damp stains when they were discontinued. The auditorium walls were painted white. A new 'readograph' illuminated sign was installed over the middle three frontage openings. The shallow street foyer and front steps were finished with a pink Terrazzo marble flooring.

The newly transformed theatre opened its doors on Boxing Day 26 December 1971 with the CinemaScope documentary *Blue Water, White Death* – the hunt for the great white shark. The main contractors were Stone & Co of Bristol, with the electrical installation done by Gwent Electrical of Newport, Monmouthshire.

ABC had wanted to install a canopy over the frontage with four projecting box signs (**A – B – C – EMI**, each in the standard ABC lozenge shape) higher up. The planning committee advised that this was not acceptable and a vertical sign with the cinema name was mounted projecting from the middle of the frontage. This was later replaced by a flat square box sign mounted over the projecting balcony with the legend '**ABC – BEAU NASH – EMI**'. The cinema name **BEAU NASH** was in yellow letters on a blue background, the same style as at the ABC Regal Uxbridge, where there was also a lease clause preventing the name change. Four flat lozenge signs (**A – B – C – EMI**) were mounted, however, over the shop and exit in Saw Close within the existing decorative signage border.

During British Film Year, 1985, ABC took the decision to ban smoking in the auditorium. Chris Armfield, manager, noted that during screenings of *A Passage to India*, the non-smoking right-hand side of the auditorium filled up first. The ABC Whiteladies Bristol had been trialling a non-smoking ban for the previous 18 months.



[L] The Beau Nash in 1973 with the vertical sign [5]

[R] The square ABC sign with the cinema name in yellow on a blue band [5]

Dolby Stereo was fitted in the early 1980s, the huge stage speakers being stored in the front stalls before being fitted behind the screen. The Dolby CP55 cinema processor was fitted in a Tallis amplifier rack. At the same time, the ageing pair of Ross model GC3 projectors were replaced by a single Kintone FP20 projector with a Peerless Magnarc lamphouse converted from carbon arc to Xenon lamp and a Kintone ST200 long-play platter was installed. The projection room equipment, auditorium lighting, screen tabs and masking were all controlled by push button from a Gretton Ward UCB (Universal Control Board) on the front wall of the projection room. This was all in place by 1985, when tours of the cinema were given for British Film Year.



The last ABC and the first Cannon programme [3]

The ABC Beau Nash carried on, now owned by Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment. Showing *Running Scared* in its last week as the ABC, the name changed to Cannon Cinema from Friday 5 December 1986 showing *Real Genius*. The cinema once again ran into signage planning issues. The planning committee felt the standard **CANNON** box sign with square corners that had been erected was too tacky and had to be replaced with one that had inwardly curved corners.



The Naked Gun showing in 1988, with replacement **CANNON** sign with rounded corners; an earlier **BEAU NASH** sign was of the same design [5]



The auditorium after the 1991 redecoration. The original 1920 auditorium ended between the second & third wall panels from the stage. Everything forward of that dates from the 1926 extension. [5]

In 1987, the auditorium was redecorated. The walls were painted an ochre colour and the plaster panels in dark red with the surround picked out in white. The roof supports were picked out in a stone colour and the ceiling in dark blue, with dark red panels and stone-coloured details.

During 1991 the 1971 light fittings over the front stalls and balcony were replaced with two single-tier and two double-tier refurbished ABC spider-type chandeliers on the original winches. Ironically, these were of the type that had been ripped out in 1971 in the name of modernisation. The peach tabs were replaced with a set of gold satin ones and the circle-mounted floodlights replaced with red footlights. Oil for the boilers still had to be pumped from a main storage tank under the pavement into a smaller feed tank by hand. The projection team had to make sure that the smaller tank didn't run dry as that would have resulted in the whole system having to be primed before it could be used again.



A new life as Komedia [6]

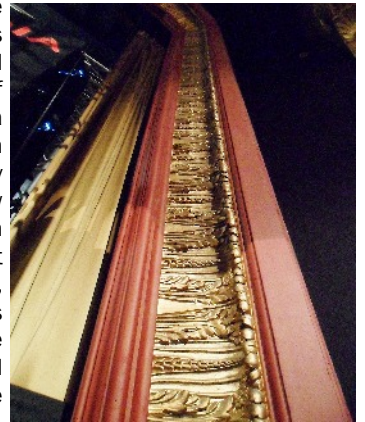
English Heritage granted the building Grade II listed status on 17 July 1995.

The next new sign above the door was the 'new' ABC from Friday 22 November 1996, showing *The First Wives Club*. The Beau Nash was part of the 90 High Street cinemas that Richard Branson's Virgin group had sold to Barry Jenkins when it bought out the Cannon circuit.

The Beau Nash closed as a cinema on 17 October 2004 with *Shark Tail*, now owned by Odeon Cinemas, who had bought out 'new' ABC from Barry Jenkins, replaced by a new Odeon multiplex a short walk away in Kingsmead.

The building was given a new lease of life on 14 November 2008 as the Komidia club. Brighton-based Komidia have made a fine job of updating the building for use as a comedy / variety venue. The open frontage has been enclosed by glass doors and the foyer now leads into a new bar, created in what was the rear stalls. The front half of the stalls has been levelled, with tables provided for diners watching the performance. The stage is still in use and the gold tabs sit open, framed within the proscenium opening.

Films returned to the Beau Nash in July 2012 for a short while when the Little Theatre started showing films, using the former balcony for seating.



Close up of the proscenium arch. This side piece dates from the CinemaScope alterations in 1953 and matches exactly the original 1926 design. [6]

Image Credits:

- [3] Bath Chronicle
- [4] Bath & Wilts Chronicle & Herald
- [5] Tony Moss Collection – CTA Archive
- [6] Author



Bar area in the rear of the stalls of the Komedia, showing two of the four 1971 modernisation light fittings. The manageress was extremely disappointed when their replacements went up, she had been expecting grand cut-glass type chandeliers. [6]



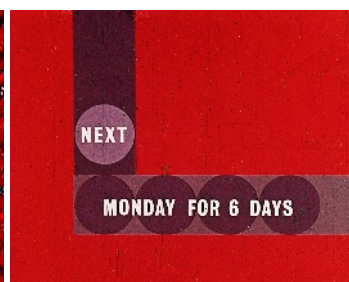
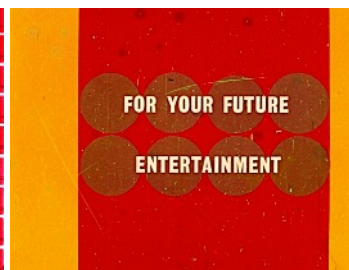
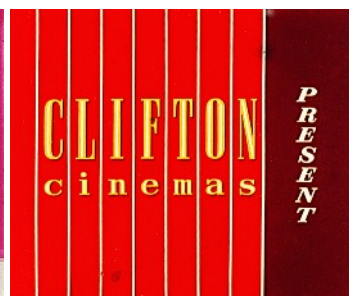
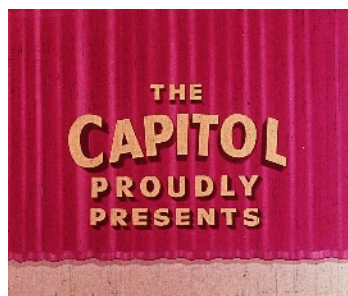
Close up of the 1926 BN crest, highlighted in it's Komedia days. [6]

DAY TITLES

By Kevin Wheelan

We remember the films. We may even remember the trailers. But how many of us remember the day titles, those short pieces of film preceding the trailers indicating when the film being trailed is to be shown? They came in sets, covering every eventuality – *All Next Week, Sunday For One Day Only, Next Monday Tuesday Wednesday, Next Thursday Friday Saturday, Coming Soon* etc – and with a variety of backgrounds, some static, others animated. Some were silent, others had sound. The problem with the latter was that, in the days of cement splices, they lost frames and consequently part of the soundtrack, every time a programme was made up and broken down.

The larger circuits would have their own sets specially made and, in some instances, so would smaller circuits and individual operators. Others would use generic titles. Originally based in London and subsequently in Perivale, Middlesex, National Screen Service Ltd, who also made film and National Anthem trailers, pretty much cornered the market on what they referred to as 'Presentation Leaders'. Thanks to CTA members Eurwyn Jones, Richard Jones and Charles Morris for providing some of the examples illustrated below, which were scanned from 35mm originals.





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1935 – NSS Adverts in Kine Year Book – 1948



**SUNDAY
FOR
7 DAYS**



**THURSDAY
FOR
3 DAYS**

**In Response
TO
PUBLIC
DEMAND**

*Will Patrons
Kindly Note*
**THAT THERE WILL BE
MATINEES
All Next Week
MONDAY to FRIDAY
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**COMING
ATTRactions**



**COMING
ATTRactions**



**COMING
ATTRactions**



**COMING
ATTRactions**



**COMING
ATTRactions**

15 frames from an animated title from the Hippodrome Ripley

THE EMBASSY CHESHAM

By David A Ellis



The Embassy in Germain Street, Chesham, run by Shipman and King opened for business on 11 January 1937. It should have been opened by Lord Chesham, supported by WF Lowndes JP. Unfortunately both fell ill and at the last moment Mr E Culverhouse, Chairman of Chesham Council deputised. There was also an appearance by film star John Lodge. He asked to be excused for appearing in makeup, explaining that he had come straight from the set. Mr N Guy Walker, the circuit supervisor made the announcement about the change and said that Lord Chesham sent his best wishes.

Following the opening performance many guests of Shipman and King dined in the restaurant. The opening attraction was *Poor Little Rich Girl* with Shirley Temple. The cinema was designed by David E Nye of Tufton Street, London and building work was by Bovis Ltd. In 1981 the CTA paid it a visit and it was reported that the cinema retained some of the best 1930s period fittings and the original carpet.

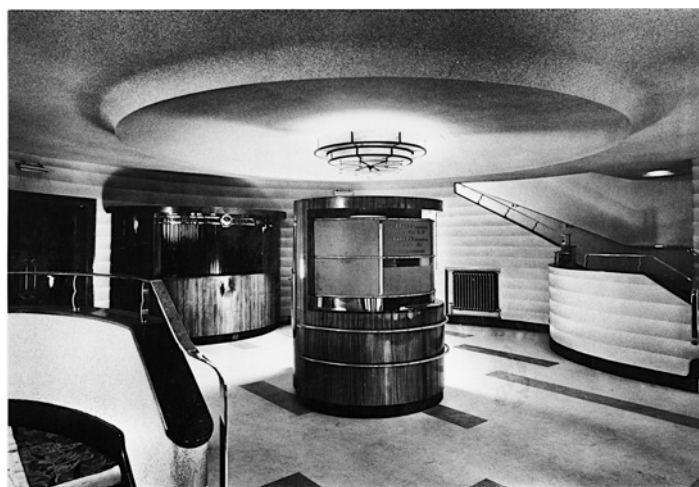


A fortnight after opening two cats were discovered inside a canopy, through which ran electrical wiring. An opening was made by workmen to allow them to escape.

The cinema also housed a restaurant on the first floor and up in the projection room Western Electric Sound was employed. At the rear of the cinema there was a large car park for patrons. In 1976 the car park was used as a market on Wednesdays from 9am until 4:30pm. This was opened by actor William Roache [Coronation Street's Ken Barlow] on 1 December.

Nineteen sixty-four wasn't a good year for the cinema. In June it was a victim of arson when a fourteen-year-old set it on fire. Two thousand pounds worth of damage was done to the foyer area. Then, in August they had a burglary. In the mid-1970s it was run by EMI. They ran the theatre until 24 April 1982. The last film was *Evil Under the Sun*. In June 1983 the bulldozers came calling and it was demolished and replaced by housing.

Photos from Tony Moss Collection, courtesy CTA Archive



EMBASSY
CHESHAM - Phone 141
CHESHAM'S NEW LUXURY SUPER CINEMA

GRAND OPENING
by the Right Honourable LORD CHESHAM, M.C., J.P.
supported by W. F. Lowndes, Esq., J.P.

on **MONDAY, JANUARY 11th**, at 8 p.m. (doors open 7.45)
SUBSEQUENTLY CONTINUOUS DAILY FROM 2 p.m.

PRICES (including tax): stalls, 6d., 1s., 1s. 6d.; circle, 1s., 1s. 6d.; balcony, 1s., 1s. 6d.; reduced prices of admission up to 8 p.m.: stalls 6d., 9d.; circle 1s., 1s. 6d.

SEATS AT 9d. MAY NOW BE BOOKED FOR THE OPENING PERFORMANCE

Stars as other pictures may be obtained in the usual way at the Embassy on the opening night.

MONDAY, JANUARY 11th, 1937. FOR THREE DAYS
SHIRLEY TEMPLE in
POOR LITTLE RICH GIRL (U)
MICKEY MOUSE in "MICKEY'S POLO TEAM."

ROCHELLE HUDSON - **PAUL KELLY** in
THE COUNTRY BEYOND (U)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14th, 1937. FOR THREE DAYS
CICELY COURTNEIDGE in
EVERYBODY DANCE (A)
also **JOHNNY DOWNS** - **SHIRLEY DEANE** in
THE FIRST BABY (A)

CAFE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC • LARGE FREE CAR PARK

CTA VISIT

Nostalgia will surround the visit by members of the Cinema Theatre association to Chesham's Embassy cinema on Sunday. The Association promotes interest in all aspects of the cinema-theatre - architecture, film projection, stage design, music, programming and publicity.

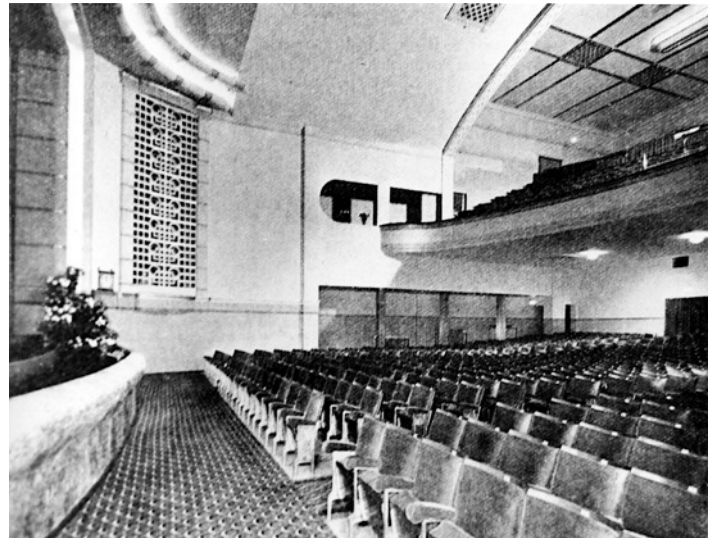
The group will spend about an hour at the cinema before going on to Aylesbury. The organisation has amongst its patrons Sir John Betjeman.

Bucks Examiner - 10 July 1981

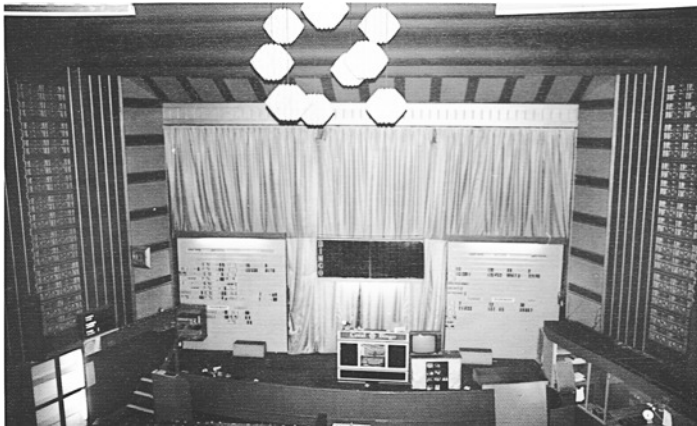
UNIDENTIFIED CINEMA PHOTOGRAPHS



Ref: 298 – no additional information



Ref: INT063 – no additional information



Ref: ML02 – Coral Bingo



Ref: 100 – no additional information



Ref: 230 – van is London SE6; photo taken 1994



Ref: C46 – Showing a Gaumont Circuit release in August 1935. Noted on back of photo 'not Marlow'.



Ref: C106 – no additional information



Ref: B21 – chief & projector?

These are some samples from a regular weekly set of unidentified cinema photographs posted 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 the archivist at archive@cta-uk.org. If you don't wish to join the Group but want to be involved in identifying these photographs they can be viewed at tinyurl.com/uomjyom.

If you recognise any of these photos, please email darron.keeling@me.com, quoting the reference number, or contact your editor (address on p2).

NEWSREEL

The items in this section are taken mainly from press cuttings from local newspapers. Although their factual accuracy has been checked by Allen Eyles, there may be minor errors in reporting dates or other detail. Allen has also added comments, where indicated. Photos by Harry Rigby within entry, except where stated. A number in curly brackets {nnnnn} is the reference for the Cinema Treasures website. Go to: [\[cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn\]](http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn)

BEESTON (Notts)

An opening date of 28 May has been announced for the new Arc cinema. Finishing touches are being applied, including 700 luxury leather electric reclining seats, laser digital projection and Dolby 7.1 sound in six of its eight screens. The remaining two screens will boast 4k laser projection and Dolby Atmos.

West Bridgford Wire – 21 April; sent in by Terry Hanstock

BISHOP AUCKLAND (Durham)

We reported on p22 of Bulletin 55/1 that proposals for a cinema at Tindale seem to have stalled and there were plans for one in the town centre. Now a developer has bought land at Tindale and will invest £50m in a leisure development, to include a seven-screen cinema. It is expected that work at the site will begin towards the end of 2021 with a “grand public opening” at the end of 2022. No operator has been named.

Northern Echo – 5 March

BISHOP'S STORTFORD (Herts)

Local residents have urged the Council to put plans for a new cinema on hold. Covid-19 has impacted councils heavily, so councillors are reviewing their budgets to propose plans which are more financially viable. However, some residents fear they will be ‘stuck’ with the new development for ‘generations’ and have appealed to the Council to wait until it’s financially viable to build a suitable theatre complex to satisfy the needs of the current population.

Herts Live – 1 March

BLACKPOOL (Lancs)



The Empire in Marton is being demolished. It opened as a cinema in August 1929. It was then a small suburban cinema seating 840 but was later enlarged and upgraded to accommodate a new foyer with a new projection room above it. It reopened in 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. Bingo took over in August 1974. Two years ago planning permission was given to build 14 flats on the site. Last year it was confirmed that it would not reopen after lockdown – see p 12 Bulletin 54/4. {6547}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken June 2009

AE writes: see also Blackpool article in current *Picture House*, page 56.

BRADFORD (West Yorks)

A fire gutted the former Oxford in Dudley Hill Road, Undercliffe on Sunday 28 February; arson is suspected. Six fire crews and one aerial unit battled the blaze for several hours and the roof of the building collapsed within minutes of their arrival.

It opened in April 1914 with 678 seats on a single floor. In 1952 a fire broke out in the projection room during a children’s matinee, destroying two reels of film. The children were led out safely and only that evening’s performance was cancelled.

On 17 October 1955 it underwent a facelift, which included complete redecoration, re-seating, carpeting, new stage drapes and curtains. During the re-fit, seating at the front was removed, reducing capacity from 700 to 500 and the proscenium had to be widened to accommodate CinemaScope presentations; the screen measured 29ft by 12ft. In the operating box was a Western Electric sound system. The conversion took five weeks to complete.

The opening attraction at the converted hall was *The Student Prince*. In December 1962 bingo became the name of the game for three days a week. The douser was finally extinguished on Saturday 8 January 1966 with *The Three Stooges Go West*. It went on to bingo full-time as the Oxford Bingo Club. {48081}

Telegraph & Argus – 3 March; Yorkshire Observer – 10 March 1952, 17 October 1955; additional material from David A Ellis; photo on front cover

BRISTOL

Revised plans to transform the St Catherine’s Shopping Centre in Bedminster have dropped the cinema element. See p21 Bulletin 54/1.

Bristol Live – 1 March

BURNLEY (Lancs)

Planning permission has been granted for the first phase of a £21m development in the town centre. It will include a seven-screen cinema, revised down from eight. It is not stated if Reel will still be the operator.

The Business Desk – 28 March

CHESTERFIELD (Derbys)



The former Regal/ABC is on the market with “price on application”. It opened in October 1936 and hosted many pop shows on stage in the 60s. In June 1971 it closed for conversion into a smaller cinema using the balcony (with a wall at the balcony front) seating 484, together with a Painted Wagon pub in the rear stalls area. The front stalls and stage were not affected by this alteration, nor were they ever used again. In 1993 it became a nightclub, which closed in 2014. The former stalls is in use by Boyes Entertainment store, who have indicated their intention to vacate. The building is on a 125-year lease from the Council at an annual rent of £1,000. The Estate Agent’s particulars can be seen at tinyurl.com/yz2f7x88. {18618}

Derbyshire Times – 18 March; photo taken September 2006

DAVENTRY (Northants)

Arc Cinemas has taken possession of the building that is to house their new four-screen cinema. Fit-out will now begin with an opening scheduled for July.

East Midland Business Link – 31 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock

EXETER

A proposal has been submitted to turn the top floor of the former Debenhams store into a four-screen cinema; the foyer would have views over the Cathedral. Tenants would be sought for the ground, first and second floors. No operator has been named.

Business Live – 6 April; East Devon News – 8 March





The Council has purchased the former BB Cinema in the town centre and has applied to demolish it at a cost of £225,000. It opened in January 1913 and was rebuilt and enlarged in 1935. Films ceased in early 1970 then bingo took over, which continued until the late 1990s. It was last used as the Babylon nightclub. {50366}

Inverclyde Now – 14 April; photo taken September 2008

KIRKCALDY (Fife)

A small band of volunteers is hoping to restore the Grade B listed King's Theatre, which closed in December 2000. It had opened in November 1904 with 2,400 seats and had a major refurbishment in 1937. It was renamed ABC in 1963 and tripled in January 1978. Work has been going on for the last five years but in recent weeks contractors have been on site putting a temporary covering on the roof to address the damage sustained in last autumn's storms and eradicate the pigeons that have infested the building. The rubble piled high in the ballroom has been removed, along with the asbestos. A gallery of 22 interior photos can be found at tinyurl.com/55ym47p3. {23081}

Fife Today – 19 April

LANCASTER

The auditorium of the former Palace/ABC is being demolished to build student flats. The façade will be retained. The Palace opened in July 1929 with 1,208 seats. It was the first ABC to get the 'luxury lounge' treatment and closed in March 1974. It has since been used as a bar and a children's play area. The CTA visited in June 2008. See p18 Bulletin 54/2. {6539}

Lancaster Past and Present Facebook Page – 2 April

LEEDS (West Yorks)

Further to the item on p22 of the last Bulletin that restoration work is to start at the Grade II listed Hyde Park Picture House, it has been confirmed that a Lottery grant has been received with match funding from Leeds City Council. A £2.8m contract has been awarded; work was due to start in April and take 57 weeks. The major revamp is to include conservation works to the external façade, expansion of the foyer and the creation of a second cinema room in the basement, underneath the main auditorium. A piled wall will be constructed around the footprint of the site to allow a two-metre dig underneath the building for the second auditorium. Whilst modern facilities will be installed, much of the heritage features will be retained and restored, including the gas lamps, thought to be the only such lights still in operation in a cinema anywhere in the world. The *Yorkshire Post* report at tinyurl.com/7wcjzht has a one-minute video interview with the projection and facilities manager. {1836}

Yorkshire Post – 17, 20 February, 16 March; *The Business Desk* – 17 March; sent in by Keith Taylorson

LIVERPOOL (Wavertree)

The former Abbey has been recommended for listing at Grade II by Historic England. It opened in March 1939 and was converted for Cinerama in 1964. The 3-strip system was taken out after only a year and 70mm installed. Films ceased in August 1979. The stalls area became a supermarket, which was vacated in April 2020. The building was taken over by Lidl, who wanted to demolish it and build a new supermarket. See p6 Bulletin 55/1. {44856}

Daily Express, Daily Record - 16 April; *Liverpool Echo* – 8, 21 April; sent in by Tom Laughlan, Mark Lees & Mike Taylor



LONDON (Camden)

Curzon Cinemas has signed an agreement to build a 6,000 sq ft five-screen multiplex in the new canal-side Hawley Street development. This could have implications for the nearby Camden Odeon (former Gaumont Palace / Gate / Parkway) which was subdivided (also into five screens) in 1997.

Evening Standard – 9 March; sent in by Ian Mitchell & Anthony Wills

LONDON (Chiswick)

The new Picturehouse cinema is hoping to finally open this spring after licensing changes were approved by the Council. It will have five screens and 420 seats and be housed in the former Ballet Rambert buildings.

Chiswick4.com – 13 March; sent in by Robert Gurd

LONDON (Ealing)

Readers will be familiar with the long-running saga of the Filmworks development on the site of the old Empire (originally Forum) Cinema in Uxbridge Road. The former cinema was demolished in 2009 after closing in September 2008. After lengthy delays the site was purchased by Land Securities following a public inquiry and sold on to St George in 2013. Eventually work started in 2016 on the main Filmworks residential development, which includes restoration of the old Forum cinema façade and provision of a new eight-screen cinema to be run by Picturehouse. Construction delays caused by Covid-19 have meant that the reopening of the cinema itself has been further delayed. However, the façade of the old cinema has been restored and was revealed earlier this year. We understand from St George that the new cinema box – adjacent to Bond Street rather than behind the restored façade – is due to be handed over to Picturehouse in April this year (although the Council suggests the summer) and the Council has also indicated that they expect the new cinema will not now open until Spring 2022 at the earliest. Ealing Civic Society (with the help of the CTA) is currently in discussion with St George about the wording of commemorative plaques to be erected adjacent to the restored cinema façade and the salvaged Walpole Picture Theatre arch (dating from c1908, the rest being demolished in 1981) in Mattock Lane. See photo p22 Bulletin 54/6. {3772}

Sent in by Robert Gurd

LONDON (Golders Green)

Concerns have been raised that the Hippodrome will be lost as a performance venue after its owners applied for change of use to a place of worship. The Centre for Islamic Enlightening said that community uses, such as for cultural events, would be maintained. {29969}

The Stage – 18 March; sent in by Barry Quinton

LONDON (Hayes, Middlesex)

Planning permission has been granted for a four-screen cinema at EMI's former vinyl record factory. Large sections of the pressing plant will be retained, including the brick façade. To be called The Gramophone it will be the first new cinema in Hayes since the Classic opened in June 1972 above a supermarket; it closed in January 1986. No operator or time scale has been given.

Building Design – 25 March

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...

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LONDON (Wealdstone)



The Herga has been demolished – quite recently, judging by the remnants left on the boarded-up site. It opened in 1939 with 500 seats and was on the site of a previous cinema. The Herga was designed by Arthur Percival Starkey and Frederick Adkins. Starkey was notable as the architect who first gave **ODEON** their cream tiled faience look with the ground-breaking South Harrow Odeon in 1933. Having the Starkey / Adkins designed Wealdstone Odeon (1934) just fifty yards away cannot have helped its longevity and the Herga closed on 3 June 1951 with Yvonne De Carlo in *The Desert Hawk* and Macdonald Carey in *Mystery Submarine*. It was later converted into a meeting hall. Starting in January 1986 it became a snooker club and by the mid-1990s was in use as a warehouse. It was later converted into retail use with two levels and was a Victor Electronics store for some time, then suffered repeated periods of closure and neglect, although the religious group who had offices on the upper level seemed to be a constant presence until its recent demise. Perhaps their lease expired? It had been scouted for possible return to cinema use as a Curzon cinema, according to information of about 18 months ago. Sadly this fine-looking, if modest, building has gone forever. {17998}

Sent in by Gary Donaldson; photo taken September 2006

LONDON (West End)



The Grade II listed former **Saville Theatre**, currently the four-screen **Odeon Covent Garden** has been saved from being developed into a hotel after two planning appeals were rejected. There is hope that it may return to live theatre use. An inspection of the building has found the original stage house and fly tower is still intact, also there are many decorative features in the auditorium that may survive behind panelling. The large frieze across the front by Gilbert Bayes depicting *Drama Through the Ages* is considered to be “one of the most important works of public sculpture of its time.” {911}

The Stage – 18 March; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson; photo taken February 2007

A £7m restoration plan has been unveiled to turn the former **Windmill** in Soho into a 250-seat “first-class performance venue and cabaret”. The building started life as a silent cinema in 1909 but was remodelled by Laura Henderson as a nude revue bar. It reverted to cinema use from 1964 to 1974 and was last used as a lap-dancing club but lost its sexual entertainment licence in 2018. {14806}

My London – 19 March; *The Stage* - 25 March; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

LUDLOW (Shropshire)



A £3.5m renovation of the **Assembly Rooms** is almost complete after a two-and-a-half-year closure. New tiered seating has been installed and the original entrance in Castle Square will be reopened. {24988}

Shropshire Star – 24 March; photo taken April 2010

LYME REGIS (Dorset)

The Grade II listed former **Regent** passed its fifth anniversary of standing empty since it was gutted by fire in March 2016. No official statement on the progress of the cinema rebuild has been released from owners WTW-Scott Cinemas since August 2019, when it was suggested that the cinema could be rebuilt with two high-quality apartments to offset the costs. An open letter has been written to the company, which has five other cinemas in the south-west and has received £230,600 in government funding. {22441}

Lyme Online – 22 March, 2, 19 April

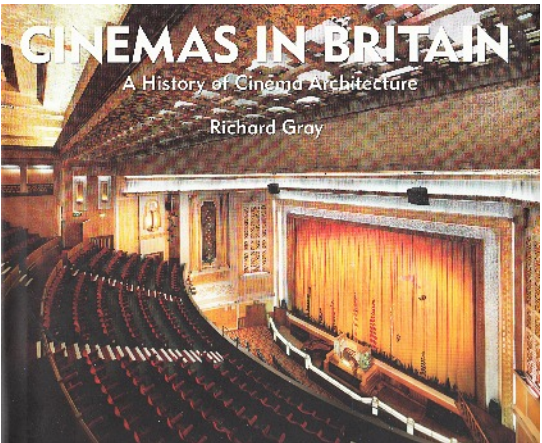
MANCHESTER (Belle Vue)

Police and fire crews attended the closed **Showcase** on Saturday night 27 February after reports of a break-in and fire. No fire was found but there was evidence of criminal damage; an investigation has been started. The former cinema is due to be demolished for a school. {25061}

Manchester Evening News – 1 March

A MUST for your collection

CINEMAS IN BRITAIN



A History of Cinema Architecture
by Richard Gray

This is the definitive guide to the buildings that were built to show moving pictures, from the earliest origins in 1896 up to the multiplex era. There are many illustrations with several in colour and a 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, normal RRP £45

Special price for CTA members
£29.50 + £3.40 postage from
CTA Sales Officer, address on p5.

MANCHESTER (Central)



The former Picture House on Oxford Road has been sold. The building will be given a sensitive restoration and converted into flats on its three upper floors. It opened in 1911 and was renamed New Oxford Theatre in 1927. It closed in October 1980 and was converted into a casino. In the mid-1980s it became a McDonald's Restaurant, which now operates 24 hours. The façade will be retained and the McDonald's, will remain open. {33855}

About Manchester – 19 February; photo taken October 2005

MARGATE (Kent)

It has been confirmed that the Council has sold the Dreamland estate to Sands Leisure for £7 million; the sale was completed on 18 December. The sale of the park, cinema, scenic railway, rides and intellectual property, was for £2.3m and the sale of the car park was for £4.7m. The town is to receive up to £22.2m funding as part of the Government's Town Deal programme; £4m is earmarked to redevelop the Grade II* listed Dreamland Cinema to include building refurbishment and asbestos removal, Sunshine Café and ground floor seafront fit-out. £2m will be spent on improving the Theatre Royal and Hawley Square. See Casework p6. {15123}

Isle of Thanet News – 22 February, 4, 22 March; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

NEWTON ABBOT (Devon)

Plans for redevelopment of the town centre have been scaled back after offered funding proved less than expected. Councillors considered scrapping plans for a new cinema but decided to keep that in and sacrifice parking instead. The Alexandra Theatre could be turned into a new eating quarter and market space; there is strong public opposition to the plans.

Herald Express, Torquay – 24 February, 10 March

PITSEA (Essex)



The owner of the former Broadway/Century has been issued with a section 215 notice by Basildon Council to demolish the building within a year or come up with a plan for redevelopment. The cinema opened in March 1930 with 670 seats on a single floor and films ceased in October 1970. It was converted into a bingo club, which closed in 2009; the building has been empty since and fallen into disrepair. The owner has put a £5m price tag on it in case the Council wants to buy it! He wants to build four shops at the bottom of the building with four more shops above them. There would also be a whopping 90 flats planned above those, to form an 11-storey building. He will be appealing the Council's decision. {28704} *photo taken April 2009*

Basildon, Canvey & Southend Echo – 14 March; sent in by Margaret Burgoine;

RAMSGATE (Kent)

Thanet Council has assured residents that rumours of the Granville Theatre being sold with plans to demolish it are incorrect. It was built as a live theatre in 1947 and in 1998 was split into two auditoria; the forward one still retains live theatre use but can double as a cinema whilst the rear is equipped for cinema use only. It is understood the lease expired last year and was handed back to the Council. {15019}

Isle of Thanet News – 16 April; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

SALFORD (Greater Manchester)



The future of the Grade II listed Rex / Salford Cinema, which for years has been used by the New Harvest Church, is in doubt as owners Pastor Richard and Nancy Salazar have told the church to leave the premises. The building began life as a Scottish Presbyterian Church in 1864 and was converted to a cinema in November 1912. Films ceased in 1958 and bingo commenced in August 1967, opened by Violet Carson (Ena Sharples); bingo stopped in 1985. {2116}

Salford Star – 26 March; photo taken October 2005

SHREWSBURY (Shropshire)



Buzz bingo in the Grade II listed former Granada is included in redevelopment plans for the Castle Street area. It says the site would be suitable for a residential mixed-use development, with expansion on the proposal including part-demolition of the cinema to offer a mix of commercial and culture, with residential on the top floor. The CTA is objecting to the proposals and issued a press release, which was picked up by the local paper (tinyurl.com/2dh4jyat). The building remains virtually untouched and is the earliest surviving complete Granada interior in the classical style. {22680}

Shropshire Star – 5 March; sent in by Richard Jones; photo above courtesy Ian Grundy; exterior photo p6 last Bulletin

AE adds: These plans seem disgustingly disrespectful of the listed building, which is well suited to live performance use and is the best preserved of the regular or standard Komisarjevsky interiors, apart from the absence of the main chandelier.

SNODLAND (Kent)



Planning permission is being sought to demolish the former Wardona / Savoy and build apartments. However the applicant is offering to rebuild the façade to the same proportions and the same look but using modern materials and also to recreate the cinema's original signage and canopy and chequerboard-patterned entry steps. It opened as the Wardona in March 1938 with 650 seats on a single floor. It was renamed Savoy in the late 1950s and closed in 1963. It has since been used for bingo, snooker and a china shop. {31632}

Kent Online – 16 April; photo taken April 2008

SOUTHPORT (Merseyside)



Mecca Bingo has confirmed that their operation in the Grade II listed former Garrick/Essoldo will not reopen after the lockdown; their lease is due to expire in September 2021 and the rent is £195,778 per annum. The Garrick Theatre opened in December 1932 with 1,600 seats and a large stage. It was sold to Essoldo in January 1957 when live shows ceased and films took over. Part-time bingo was introduced during 1963 but had become full-time by that November.

Logic would suggest that the Garrick Theatre be returned to theatre use and the single-floored Southport Theatre be turned into a modern bingo hall for Mecca – to the benefit of both parties! It would appear that the building is or has been up for sale, as Estate Agents' particulars dated March 2018 (tinyurl.com/t6kkj6a8) state an asking price in excess of £1,667,000! More information on the *Playing Bingo* website at tinyurl.com/pxne7pcz. {22651}

Stand up for Southport – 6 April; sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken October 2007

ULVERSTON (Cumbria)

The building housing the Roxy and the Laurel and Hardy Museum has been put on the market again with offers sought in the region of £190,000. Cinema operator Charles Morris said they have been forced to cope with attempts to sell the building before. "We want to stay here," he said, "but it's got to the point where I can't invest anything as I don't know what the future will be." The property details can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/6akaa396. {18520}

The Mail, Cumbria – 20 March; *Westmorland Gazette* – 25 March; sent in by Philip Crompton & Terry Hanstock

WAKEFIELD (West Yorks)

The CTA has accused the Council of vandalism in wanting to demolish the former ABC. And while the council has carefully avoided use of the word "demolition" all the signs are pointing towards that outcome though this won't become definite until the necessary surveys are completed. The building has stood empty for 20 years. See Casework p6 and p27 Bulletin 55/1. {3787}

Yorkshire Live – 5 March; tinyurl.com/3sw3hxpz

WORKINGTON (Cumbria)

The owner of the six-screen Plaza at Dunmail Park (Graves Cumberland Ltd) has confirmed it will not reopen after the current closure as they are unable to agree lease terms. Instead they will open a three-screen cinema in the town centre, to be called the Ritz. It will be in the unit formerly used by a children's soft play centre at the top of John Peel House, which currently houses Opera Bingo, also run by Graves. Contractors were due to start conversion work at the end of April.

Cumbria Crack – 12, 24 April; sent in by Terry Hanstock

OVERSEAS NEWS

LOS ANGELES (USA)

It has been announced that the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures will open to the public on 30 September. It will include a 1,000-seat cinema capable of screening digital, 70mm and 35mm with nitrate capabilities and a smaller 288-seat cinema. The museum has been steadily acquiring artefacts since 2008 and the collection now numbers over 5,000 items. See tinyurl.com/xhfrwnf7.

Design Boom – 10 March



The parent company of Pacific Theatres and ArcLight Cinemas announced that both would permanently close following a year-long closure due to the Covid-19 crisis. This includes the 1963 Cinerama Dome in Hollywood, one of only three theatres in the world that can show 3-strip Cinerama. As the building is a scheduled historic monument, it is unlikely that it will be demolished or repurposed. Since Pacific Theatres owns the property outright, it's at least possible the company could reopen the venue under a different business structure or lease to a different operator. {33}

The Architect's Newspaper – 13 April; *Variety* – 14 April; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo by UpdateNerd via Wikimedia, creative commons licence

MOSCOW (Russia)

The Art Elektro Theatre has reopened after a seven-year restoration, costing at least 1.5 billion roubles (about US\$ 20 million). It opened in 1909 in Art Nouveau style with 450 seats. In 1926 the world première of *Battleship Potemkin* was held there. The main auditorium now has 474 seats and a Dolby Atmos sound system. {64837}

Moscow Times – 6 April; sent in by Bob Bradshaw

SMALL ADS

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

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

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

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

FOR SALE: Cinema Books, 16mm Projector Lens, plus 8mm & 16mm Spools. Send large SAE for list to: Maurice Brader, 55 Parthian Avenue, Wyberton, Boston, PE21 7DH Email: lawncinema@hotmail.co.uk

LATE NEWS

IPSWICH (Suffolk)

Plans have been approved for a £300,000 upgrade at the Regent Theatre in a bid to attract bigger shows. A modular building will be created behind the theatre to increase and improve backstage facilities for performers. The project will be built over the summer and be ready in time for the beginning of the autumn season in September. {13683}

Ipswich Star - 3, 10 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock

KEIGHLEY (West Yorks)

The Picture House suffered a break-in in mid-April. Nothing was taken but burglars smashed two internal doors to get into the office; the repairs will cost hundreds of pounds. The cinema is hoping to reopen on 17 May. {6235}

Keighley News - 22 April

LONDON (Harrow)



The metal cladding of the front of the Dominion/Safari has been removed, revealing the original magnificent FE Bromige façade. Unfortunately it was not visible for long as scaffolding was soon erected. The façade will be restored and the auditorium demolished and flats built instead. There is a promised mini-cinema in the basement. There is another photo on p4. {21135}

Sent in and photos by Gary Donaldson at UnrestrictedTheatre.co.uk

STOURBRIDGE (Dudley)



Plans have been submitted to demolish the former Danilo/Essoldo and build 34 'extra care' flats. It opened in May 1940 and closed in December 1963. It became bingo and later a nightclub. A single-storey extension was added on the front of the building. {37749}

Stourbridge News - 22 April; sent in by Ivan Harris; photo taken June 2003

WOLVERHAMPTON

Police raided the Grade II listed former Odeon on 21 April after being alerted to suspicious activity. Around 700 cannabis plants were found growing across four floors and four men were found hiding in a lift shaft. The cinema opened in September 1937 and films ceased in June 1983. It became a bingo hall, which closed in 2007 and it opened as the Diamond Banqueting Suite in October 2009. {22734}

Express & Star - 22 April; photo top next column



The former Odeon Wolverhampton in May 2006

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

By Gary Painter

CTA Scotland had information way back in 2004 that what was the Cinema House in Nicolson Street, Edinburgh was being demolished and were sent photos of it. We stuck them on the Scottish Cinemas website at tinyurl.com/h6pzbws.



Last year, just before lockdown, we were contacted by the former CEO of the Royal College of Surgeons, which is housed in a rather grand classical pillar-and-porticoed building [above]. The former CEO informed us that the building we were told was the cinema that was demolished in 2004 was, in fact, an old laboratory to the left of the College and that the cinema was actually behind the tenement to the right of the college building. Not only that but he said that the college bought the property when the cinema closed in the 1920s with the intention of demolishing it but that they were prevented from doing so because the flat roof of the auditorium contained drying greens for the residents of the tenements, which had to be maintained by some provision in the deeds. So they kept the cinema and only some of the proscenium end of the building was truncated. Apparently, the balcony and rear of the auditorium remain, although they are in very poor condition. Naturally, we requested access to record this and it was granted but lockdown then came along and... well, you know the rest! Hopefully one day soon we'll get in. So, it looks like the building to the right of the photo is the façade of the former cinema, with some remains behind. Our history page for the cinema states that:

The former Cinema House in Nicholson St, Edinburgh [...] opened as the North British Electric Theatre in 1903. It was later renamed the Cinema House and in 1911 was attempting to compete in the cut-throat Edinburgh cinema market by offering free afternoon teas. It became **The Imperial** for a time during the First World War and seated around 500. Became part of the Gaumont circuit in 1928, before closing in 1930. It was later a Salvation Army citadel.

The College appear to refer to it as the Congress Hall.

Photo by Kim Traynor via Wikimedia, creative commons licence

REWINDING BACK

Sent in by David A Ellis

SHOWROOM VISIT

Mr Arthur Cheetham of Rhyl, Colwyn Bay and Aberystwyth took a trip to London last weekend for the purpose of visiting the big showrooms. I understand he has booked several exclusives for his theatres, the first of which will be *A Sicilian Tragedy*. By the courtesy of Mr W Hunter of the Picturedrome Chester, he is this week showing a film of the Premier's visit to Chester, which includes the famous suffragette and bag of flour incident.

Kiné Weekly – 22 August 1912

KALEE PROJECTORS.

During the last week Kalee projectors have been supplied by the New Century Film Service Limited to the Harehills Cinema Leeds, the Tivoli Picture Palace Castleford, the Cosy Picture Palace Keighley, the Princess' Hall Hull and the Picture Hall Cobridge, Staffs. The New Century Film Service Limited must feel very gratified at the steadily increasing sale of the 'Kalee' and this undoubtedly speaks well for the high quality of the projector.

Publication unknown – 29 August 1912

FLYING MACHINE ADVERTISING

Councillor Arthur Cheetham of Rhyl, Colwyn Bay and Aberystwyth is, I think, the first picture-theatre proprietor to utilise the flying machine for advertising purposes. Mr Vivian Hewitt, the well-known North Wales airman, frequently flies over Rhyl and the towns and villages in the neighbourhood in his Bleriot bi-plane and on the most recent occasion he was induced by Councillor Cheetham to distribute, while so flying, some thousands of cards advertising the Market Street Cinema. People were greatly curious to find out what it was that was fluttering earthwards after Mr Hewitt had passed overhead and there was quite a scramble for these novel advertising souvenirs.

Kiné Weekly – 24 October 1912

PLAZA BATLEY CHANGES HANDS

I understand that M Goldstone, who owns the Victoria Wellington and Pavilion (now Regal) at Hunslet as well as the Empire Huddersfield, has parted with the Plaza Batley to the owners of the Pavilion Heckmondwike and Florence Street Cinema Harehills, which houses are conducted by Charlie Carcross of Heckmondwike.

BRADFORD FIRE THRILL

Last week saw a fire at the Hippodrome Bradford, when a film jammed and burst into flames. Seven hundred people left in an orderly manner and there was nothing in the nature of a panic. Meantime the operator, Norman Massender, after closing the shutter, had smothered the blazing film with wet blankets but not before about 800ft had been destroyed and the Western Electric 'talkie' set, installed only a week ago, had been damaged. The Fire Brigade had been summoned but on arrival their services were not required.

CINEMA OPERATORS TO PASS EXAM

The Leeds Watch Committee, among other new minor rules and regulations for cinemas, has instructed the Town Clerk to prepare and submit a draft of an additional condition of licences granted under the Cinematograph Act of 1909, requiring that all cinema operators shall pass an examination before being permitted to take charge of an operating box.

Above three items: The Bioscope – 5 March 1930

NEW UNIFORM CONTRACT



The Walpole cinema Ealing has just placed a contract for the supply of new uniforms for the male and female staff and has selected designs and stuffs submitted by the Uniform Clothing and Equipment Co Ltd of Clerkenwell. The colour scheme is very unusual, the uniforms and dresses being a purple cloth, with facings of French grey and gold trimmings.

The Bioscope – 21 October 1931

DEATH OF A BUCKLEY MANAGER

Mr Noel T Cropper, a well-known Buckley man, died at his residence, Coleshill, Mynydd on Saturday evening after a brief illness. Mr Cropper, who was only 33 years of age was the manager of the firms of Cropper and Sons, printers, stationery and newsagents of Lane End, Buckley. He was also sub-postmaster of the Lane End Post Office and manager of the Palace Picture House, Buckley. Mr Cropper was an accomplished musician and a fortnight ago he played in the orchestra of a performance of *The Messiah* in the Tabernacle Chapel, Buckley. He was treasurer of the Buckley Amateur Pantomime Company and was a member of the Buckley Congregational Church. He leaves a widow and one son.

Flintshire County Herald – 10 January 1936

MP OPENS NEW CINEMA

South London's newest cinema is at South Norwood – the Odeon, Station Road. It is to be opened by the MP for the Division, Col the Hon GKM Mason DSO on Monday. Built in the modern tradition, the Odeon caters for patrons' comfort in every way – seating, lighting, acoustics, air conditioning and a car park adjacent, leaving nothing to be desired. Seating 1,650 the theatre has been erected and finished in a restful scheme of black, cream and jade green glass. For deaf patrons the BTH earphone system has been installed and the cinema is under the management of Mr SF Aspinall, a man of experience in the business. A special feature of the opening ceremony will be the visit of the Kneller Hall Band of RM School of Music, while on the screen will be the newly-found child star Hazel Ascott in *Talking Feet*. For the rest of the week the programme is Humphrey Bogart in *The Black Legion* and Claud Hulbert in *The Vulture*.

The News – 23 July 1937

CINEMA OWNER'S DEATH

Mr Robert Rowlands, aged 65, proprietor of the Tivoli Picture House, Buckley, has died at this home in Brunswick House, Buckley. Mr Rowlands, who was a native of Buckley, was a former member of the Buckley Urban Council. He is survived by his widow and three daughters.

Flintshire County Herald – 18 March 1938

OPENING CEREMONY

Valerie Hobson performed the opening ceremony on Saturday last of the new Clifton cinema, Stone Cross, West Bromwich. The Clifton, which has a seating capacity of 1,200, is being managed by PJ Cleife, formerly manager of the Scala Stourbridge.

The Era – Thursday 21 July 1938

PLAZA FLINT, READY THIS YEAR



The Plaza Flint in April 2010

The erection of the New Plaza Cinema, Flint, is now progressing rapidly. The contractors, John Hughes and Co Ltd of Wrexham, are sparing no endeavour to get the Kinema ready for the scheduled opening date, next Boxing Day. It will have a seating capacity of 1,000 and will be fully modern in every detail. The proprietors are Flint Enterprise Cinemas Ltd, a subsidiary company of Deeside Enterprise Cinemas Ltd, whose head office is at Bridge House, Queensferry. T Williams is managing director of both companies. The architect for the new Plaza is S Colwyn Foulkes, M.Arch, ARIBA.

Kiné Weekly – 1 September 1938

LETTERS

MATTERS ARISING - IRELAND

Delighted that Mr Sykes had such a pleasant trip in better times. Just a few comments to add. It is indeed the Odeon Charlestown he saw from the M50 partial ring road. (Sometimes suggested that the M50 was so named because it was twice as bad as the M25!) A small cinema seems to indeed have operated in Tarbert in the late 1960s / early 1970s called the *Shannon*. I have no record of any cinema in Adare or in Foynes. The Compton Organ at the *Savoy* Limerick is no longer extant; it probably was destroyed sometime after Rank closed the cinema in June 1974. With very intermittent use as a concert venue, until the *Savoy* building was eventually demolished in 1989, it could have been at any time in this period. Ironically, the sister Compton from the *Savoy* Cork is indeed in the concert hall of the University of Limerick but long out of use and now in lockdown. I hope that he can make a return visit when conditions permit. Best wishes from Dublin on the second St Patrick's Day of lockdown.

Bob Bradshaw

LYRIC CARMARTHEN

I enclose some more information in relation to the Lyric Theatre, Carmarthen, as featured on page 21 of the March/April Bulletin. I am reliably informed that the leading campaigner whose efforts saved the cinema from closure and who is the main focus of the forthcoming film *Save the Cinema* was a local councillor Liz Evans, who ran a hairdressers in Carmarthen. She is the mother of Welsh tenor Wynne Evans, who many will know better as Gio Compario in the TV advertisement for comparison site *Go Compare*. Apparently, she barricaded herself in the building for a considerable time as a squatter to prevent the demolition of the cinema after it closed in 1993. The last time I remember a film based on a Welsh cinema, which some members will recollect, was *Coming Up Roses*, filmed in the former Rex Cinema, Aberdare, now demolished. Coincidentally, many fittings belonging to the Rex were acquired by the Lyric when it was refurbished in 1986. The Lyric currently operates as a multi-purpose entertainment centre with occasional cinema use, managed by the Council-funded Carmarthenshire Theatres, who also run the modern Ffwrnes Theatre in Llanelli and the Miners Theatre in the listed former Welfare Hall in Ammanford. The Lyric and Welfare Hall were both visited by the CTA as part of the *West is Best* event in April 2010. The film is due for release at the end of this year.

John Skinner

TAUNTON FROM THE AIR



The casework item about the Gaumont Palace Taunton sent me rummaging on my hard-drive for the attached aerial view of the cinema. Taken in May 1932, the location and the direction to its aerodrome can be in no doubt! The reminiscences about the *Classic / Cornerhouse* and *Manchester National Film Theatre* (the title in the photograph) also caught my eye. I vaguely recall the latter was next to or over a discotheque, the noise from which was audible in the cinema, usually towards the end of the show on a Friday and Saturday night. The photo of the main screen at the *Cornerhouse* shows well the minimal rake to the floor, especially towards the screen. I vividly recall seeing *My Beautiful Laundrette* there; or, more accurately, the backs of heads in a full house!

Hector Hill

GRANADA ANECDOTES



Granada were always known to be ultra-hard-nosed business people, as witnessed by Sidney Bernstein's fight to demolish the Granada at Tooting. In February 1970, having started photographing cinemas before they disappeared forever, I took a trip to Edmonton to photograph the Granada, where I had spent many happy hours, particularly watching the Sunday-only horror films. To my dismay it was being torn down [above]. I wrote to Granada saying how sad I was at its demise and asking if I could buy some pictures of it. I was invited to their London headquarters by a Mr John Goodstein. I duly attended his office, where I was given a cup of coffee and a cigarette, quizzed as to my intentions and given several lovely photos but not until I had signed a declaration that they were for private use only. Mr Goodstein's parting words were that one should never be sentimental about bricks and mortar. Several years later, on reading Guy Morgan's book *Red Roses Every Night* about Granada Theatres during World War II, I discovered that Mr Goodstein had been manager at Edmonton during part of the conflict. So perhaps he wasn't quite so unsentimental as he made out.

Several years later I wrote to Granada again, expressing my interest in their theatres and asking if I could copy some of their photos. On arrival at head office I was presented with numerous albums containing photos of their various properties and told that I could copy some but only those I really wanted. Then to my delight the gentleman, whose name I cannot recall, said, "I have to go to lunch. Do you mind if I leave you to it?" Within minutes I had set up the camera and cable release on a tripod, had found the best place for light and had got a production line going. By the time he came back I had copied the lot. When he asked if I had copied just those I really wanted, I was able to truthfully answer in the affirmative. Because, of course, I really wanted them all!

My late friend and former CTA member Monty Meyer worked for Minerva, the burglar alarm company, as a breakdown engineer. One day he was called to Granada's London head office, only to discover that Minerva's name and number on the bell box had been overpainted. He asked why and was told by a Granada staff member that Mr Bernstein would not allow any free publicity on his premises. Monty stressed that it was essential to have the company details visible in case the police needed to contact them but his words fell on deaf ears. However, Monty had the last laugh. Having gone to the gents, he pointed out to the same staff member that the manufacturer's name was still plainly visible on the urinals!

PS: Just look at that demolition man on top of the flytower in the photo above. He was knocking the bricks out from underneath him. Nowadays, Health & Safety would have a fit! {22837}

Kevin Wheelan

LUTON TIME CAPSULE

With reference to the time capsule discovered at the former Ritz Luton, (page 22 of the March/April Bulletin), I can reveal that the H Ambridge mentioned in the time capsule was Herbert Ambridge, often referred to as 'Bertie', who hailed from Ystalyfera, a mining and ironworking community in the upper Swansea Valley but according to the 1939 census was living at 40 Third Avenue in Luton, occupation plasterer and solid heavy worker. What was a plasterer from Ystalyfera doing in Luton in 1937, working at the Ritz cinema? It transpires that Herbert had an older brother called Stanley who had also moved to Luton, residing at 59 Linden Road, occupation foot press operator steel and motor, which suggests that he was employed at the Vauxhall motor works in the town. Did Herbert move to Luton as a result of a brother living there or did they both move at the same time? We shall never know as Herbert died at the age of 74 in 1980. This is an interesting piece of social history as during the Depression years of the 1930s there was high unemployment in South Wales and other heavy industrial areas, causing much migration to find work in the new industries in towns such as Luton and Slough, including opportunities for tradesmen such as Herbert in the boom years of cinema building at this time. I was particularly interested in this item of news as another of my roles is as Secretary of the Ystalyfera Heritage Society and this will be added to our archive.

John Skinner

ODEON STOURBRIDGE MODEL



I thought your readers, especially those who remember the Odeon Stourbridge, would like to see my lockdown model cinema project. It took me the three months of the lockdown to build! My childhood was spent visiting this cinema and introduced me to my love of cinema architecture. It is 1/24th scale and fortunately I had copies of the original Webb & Gray architects' plans plus many photographs to work from. As you can see, I only built part of the stage end of the large fan-shaped auditorium. I would love to have built more but then we would have had to move house! The only slight 'cheat' is that I have made it timeless. Although the auditorium changed very little since opening as the Central in 1929, I have included the Compton organ, which was removed in 1958. The tabs and screen, plus other minor alterations, are how I remember it in the 1960s. Sadly it was demolished in 1995, so I hope that the memory will live on with this model. I attach a photograph and hope it is of interest.

John Griffiths

YOUR SCREEN

A while ago, during one of the CTA chat sessions, I mentioned something called Yourscreen and David T-J suggested I send you the info for the Bulletin: Yourscreen is an online platform for watching films, which is linked to independent cinemas and film clubs. So if your local cinema is one of the partners, you can get a discount on the ticket price and continue to support them, even if you cannot get to the cinema in person. If your local cinema/club is not a partner, you can still help to support independent film exhibitors by using this platform. watch.yourscreen.net. It should not be confused with Ourscreen which is another online screening platform! www.ourscreen.com. I am aware that there are lots of ways for people to see films online now but Yourscreen does at least benefit 'real' cinemas!

Alexia Lazou

MAN WITH THE GONG

In Bulletin 54/1 (Jan/Feb 2020) Michael Armstrong asked the question about the Rank logo in reverse that he was given: heavy, made of brass but not a printing block... Well, it's a stamping die, used to create the 'Man with the Gong' for each Rank-operated venue, out of much thinner and therefore malleable copper, compared to brass. As such, the item is probably a one-off.

Darron Keeling

Editor's Note: Michael sadly passed away recently so unfortunately he will never know the answer to his question.

HISTORY OF EARLY CINEMA

I wonder if you can point me in the right direction? I know that your focus is cinema buildings. My interest is in the people who were involved in setting up that business and how they did it. This arises from my discovery in family history research that a number of my ancestors were involved in setting up and running cinemas, from about 1908 to 1930-ish. In particular, I'm interested in a Harry (Henry James) Gale, who opened and operated cinemas in Yeovil, Lowestoft (the Hippodrome), Bideford, Forfar (Reid Hall) and other places in Scotland and Aberystwyth (the Coliseum). Has anyone done any research on these people? Is there anything in print or on line? Has anyone written anything about the business of setting up a cinema? The people I've come across seem to rock up in a town, spot a suitable big building and start a cinema business. Surely it wasn't that easy? Where did they get the equipment - how did they source the films? Were there local authority licences to get? As I say, I know this is not really your focus but I'm hoping you may be able to point me towards sources of information. I have been in touch with the Bill Douglas Centre at Exeter University and I think they may have material in their library but, like everyone else, they are in lockdown.

Mike Whitaker

ODEON POSTER REVEALED



Here's a little treat, a poster revealed when the former Odeon/Regal in Lancaster was in the throes of being demolished in January 2010; probable not seen since 1947! {6538}

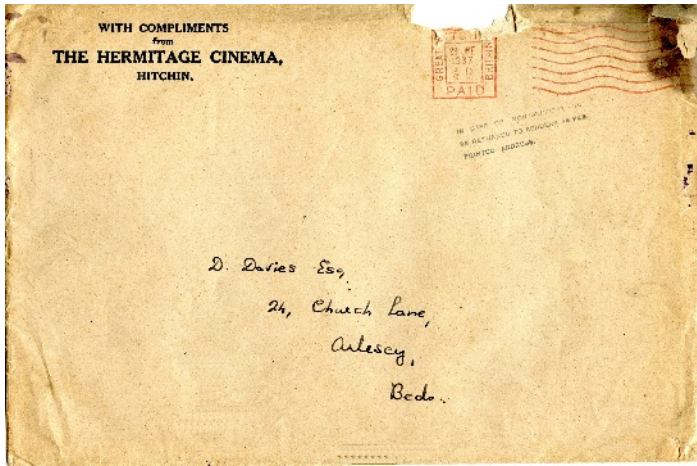
Darron Keeling

REGENT REDCAR MEMORIES

Reading the article on the Regent Redcar took me back to a time I worked for Thompson (1965-1974) and I know some of the people included in the story. In October 1971 I had a call to the Regent for five days in the projection box. I found automatic changeovers; tags on the film started up and changed over and a metal pellet between the carbons vaporised when power came on and left the lamp on. By the way, Nobles had at least ten cinemas used for film and/or bingo. Later, the Regent came into a film cooperative run by JN Edwards. I visited later and was shown the new projector, a Westar 7000, by Simon Edwards; we had both worked at the Carlton. At college, instructional programmes were on film, so in 1965 I was showing 16mm films, so when a job came up at the local cinema (Majestic Middlesbrough) I went for it and so began a long career (1965-2006) in 12 cinemas across four counties.

Anthony Smith

CUSTOMER SERVICE



Further to my article on Cinema Programmes on p10 of Bulletin 55/1, the programme for the Hermitage Hitchin came in its own envelope. A rare survivor, I would think.

Kevin Whelelan

SOUTH DEVON CINEMAS

Many thanks indeed for your report in the latest Bulletin on South Devon Cinemas. I am delighted to read of the long-awaited regeneration programme of the Torbay Picture House. I took out Life Membership of the CTA some time ago in the hope of eventually reading this news. My grandfather William Farrant Gilley (1885-1970) owned the cinema as well as the Regent in Paignton. I live in West Sussex so it is very heartening to watch progress from afar. One of his daughters, my aunt Audrey Gilley, lived on London Road, High Wycombe, which I remember well.

Madeleine Beard

BRIAN MEGSON

Sad to hear of the passing of another 'northern cinema man' namely Brian Megson. I worked 35 years in the industry for the same company and obviously had heard of Brian but never met him until I left the cinema trade in the late 1980s. One Saturday morning, out of the blue, I received a phone call from Brian asking me if I could help him out at the Hebden Bridge Picture House by covering the matinée and evening show as the projectionist had fallen off a ladder and been taken to hospital for a check-up. On arriving at the cinema I was met by the projectionist sporting an egg-sized lump on his head and a black eye. He assured me he was OK for the shows but I stood-by for the matinée just to be certain. After this I met Brian and found him to be a typical, blunt, down to earth Yorkshire man who could 'reel off' many anecdotes about the industry, in a most amusing manner. Recently on YouTube I came across a film of Brian and the late Jim Schultz called *The Projector Man*. Very interesting viewing.

Derrick L Todd

WE GOT ELEGANCE

The Broadway in Bexleyheath closed in 1956; I was one year old then so I never went in. It then became a supermarket for about thirty years, mostly Tesco. Sometime in the 1990s it became a pub / bar / restaurant under various guises; it closed about three years ago and remained empty. It has now been refurbished and named the **Elegance Lounge**. All the glass at the front is frosted thus I couldn't see in and, of course, because of Covid it is not open. I wait to see how the business fares. The CTA visited in 1998. {27786}

Ian Mitchell

ST AUSTELL

Further to the article on p28 of the last Bulletin about the Capitol, it ended up in the WTW empire before it closed; I don't know when Classic let it go. It closed on 14 February 1981 when the Film Centre (ex Odeon/Classic) tripled about that time. I believe that it is an independent Bingo operation. {42690}

Tim McCullen

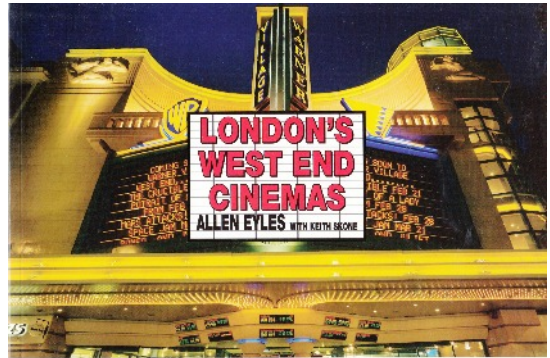
ERRATA

On page 20 of the last Bulletin, under Barnsley, the Parkway opened in 1956 as the Gaumont (not 1965). {6208}

Spotted by Jeremy Buck

London's West End Cinemas

by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.



The history of London's West End cinemas dates back more than one hundred years. This book details all of them, in chronological order, totalling well over one hundred, from 1906 up to 2013. The best of the West End's cinemas were outfitted to a very high standard to match their role as show-cases for new films, hosting press shows and premières, as well as a being a magnet for film enthusiasts anxious to see films on exclusive première runs. Even now, when films are available everywhere at the same time, the West End's cinemas are a vibrant attraction to visitors from all over the world as well as for Londoners having a night on the town. There are interior views as well as exteriors of most of the cinemas and over 50 illustrations are in full colour, together with appendices of club cinemas and theatres used as temporary cinemas.

Large Format paperback, 210 pages, over 400 illustrations, £25.00 plus £3.40 postage, from the Sales Officer.

Published in 2013 in conjunction with English Heritage.

Ordering details on p5

PERTINENT COMMENT



This was on the canopy at the Everyman (ex Odeon) Muswell Hill, London. Let's hope *The Angry Silence* doesn't become *The Last Picture Show*. {13783}

Sent in by Michael Jones

THE LAST SHOWING

The Last Showing, a film made in 2014, was shot in the Vue Cheshire Oaks at Ellesmere Port. I bought the DVD for £1 in Poundland but it is also listed on CEX for £2. May suit horror buffs who like the location, and involves a projectionist facing redundancy devising a real horror experience for his manager and two guests at a midnight screening.

Sent in by Martin Tapsell

MISCELLANY

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CINEMAS IN THE WORLD

Time Out magazine has compiled a list of the 50 most beautiful cinemas in the world. The top ten are:



1. Tuschinski Amsterdam [above]
2. Le Grand Rex Paris
3. Village East Cinema New York
4. Cineteca Madrid
5. Electric Portobello Road, London
6. Cinema Dei Piccoli Rome
7. The Astor Melbourne
8. Cinerama Dome Los Angeles†
9. The Civic Auckland
10. Puskin Art Cinema Budapest

Other UK ones in the list are the Rio Dalston, London at #15, the Mareel Shetland Islands at #26, the BFI Southbank London at #36, the Genesis Mile End, London at #42, the Tivoli Bath at #46 and the Curzon Bloomsbury London at #47.

The full list with photos can be seen at tinyurl.com/vj7j4b8k. Further information on the Tuschinski at www.amsterdam.info/cinema/tuschinski.

Sent in by Michael Crowle & Anthony Wills; photo by Michelle Facey

VUE ADMITS HEALTH AND SAFETY CHARGES

Vue cinemas has admitted two health and safety charges at Birmingham Crown Court over the death of a man crushed under a motorised footrest. Ateeq Rafiq, 24, died after he got his head stuck under a seat while searching for his keys at the Star City cinema in March 2018. The inquest in 2019, which ended in a verdict of accidental death, was told the reclining chair had been missing a bar that would have allowed him to be released by hand. Sentencing was adjourned until 20 July.

BBC News – 7 April; Metro – 8 April; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Tom Laughlan

JAMES BOND POSTER SALE

A collection of over 350 James Bond movie posters was auctioned by Ewbank on 9 April. A quad poster for *Dr No* [R] sold for £16,000, one for *From Russia With Love* raised £8,000 and an exhibitor's campaign book for *Goldfinger* went for £1,200. The full set of results can be seen at:

www.ewbankauctions.co.uk/Movie-Posters/2021-04-09

Daily Record – 28 March; sent in by Tom Laughlan;

Daily Mirror – 2 April; sent in by Barry Quinton

WETHERSPOON EXPANDS

Wetherspoons has announced £145m plans to open 18 new pubs and refurbish dozens more – but warned the investment was conditional on no more lockdowns and “constant changing of rules”. The list can be seen at tinyurl.com/4pezkt46. It is not stated if any of these are in former cinemas.

Sky News – 30 March; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

† See Newsreel p28.

CTA ARCHIVE

The Cinema Theatre Association Archive is open for research visits and for enquiries from members and the general public. Located in a modern building on the outskirts of Southend-on-Sea, the Archive offers all the facilities and resources you would expect from a modern archive. The Archive contains an extensive collection of material that has been steadily growing since its inception in 1967. This includes books, periodicals, articles, newspaper cuttings, photographs, plans and drawings, many donated or acquired from leading architects or industry figures and supplemented by personal collections and research. The breadth of the collection is such that there are very few topics related to cinema history, architecture, design or operation that are not represented.

MAKING AN ENQUIRY OR ARRANGING A VISIT

Please visit the new Archive website for full details or to make an enquiry: cta-uk.org/archive. The *Exploring the Archive* page of the website includes catalogues and lists for various collections along with indexes for periodicals including the Bulletin and Picture House. You may find these lists useful in identifying material for research. As the catalogues can only provide a brief snapshot of a small part of the Archive, please use the enquiry form that can be found on the *Making an Enquiry* page to tell us about a project you are undertaking or subject which you are interested in researching – or maybe it's a photograph that eludes you. Visiting the Archive is not normally necessary and material can simply be sent to you.

VOLUNTEERING AT THE ARCHIVE OR FROM HOME

The Archive is maintained entirely by volunteers. Volunteering can be a very interesting and rewarding experience and you do not have to be a member to be a volunteer. Volunteers might file, organise and sort the collections, deal with enquiries or undertake special projects. You don't need any experience or particular skills. If you cannot easily visit the Archive and have computer skills, a scanner or access to Word or Excel at home, you can still volunteer as we have plenty of work that can be undertaken remotely without visiting the Archive.

DONATING MATERIAL TO THE ARCHIVE

Please visit the *Donating Material* page of the website. Almost everything held in the Archive has been donated and is the main way that the collection grows. The Archive will not turn down material which is on subject and adds to the breadth of its holdings so please do not hesitate to contact us if you have something which you think should be preserved. If the material includes books or magazines, please first prepare a list and submit it to us, so we can determine which copies are not already held. We will occasionally accept books that are already held if they are in good condition, on the understanding that they will be sold to raise funds. Please do not post items to the Archive address as there is no facility to receive parcels when it is closed and they may be lost or returned to you as undelivered. Please contact the Archivist, who can provide a safe address. Although we always prefer to receive original material, if you cannot part with the originals we are happy to accept scanned material or copies of your digital photographs.

ARCHIVE TWITTER

You may be interested to know that the Archive regularly posts messages, often including photographs, on its Twitter account – [@CTA_Archive](https://twitter.com/CTA_Archive). Please feel free to follow us if you use Twitter, alternatively you can view these messages via the link on our website or by visiting twitter.com/CTA_Archive.

CONTACTING THE ARCHIVE

To make an enquiry please use the enquiry form on the website. For any other matter, such as donations or volunteering, please email archive@cta-uk.org or if you do not have Internet access call 07971752807.

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

QUOTATIONS

More cinematic quotations from the list sent by Gavin McGrath:

- ♦ I'm not a real movie star. I've got the same wife I started out with 28 years ago.

Will Rogers

- ♦ Some of my best leading men have been horses and dogs.

Elizabeth Taylor

OBITUARY

JOHN SURTEES 1945-2021



It was with great sadness that we heard that John Surtees had died following another stroke, passing away with Joy at his bedside on 11 March.

Like many of that immediate post-war generation, John liked aeroplanes with propellers, ships with funnels and single-screen cinemas. However, he was not to be defined by that, as he was also an enthusiast for rock and pop music of the sixties and seventies, electric cars, Formula One racing and Apple computers, amongst many other interests.

John lived most of his life in the Southampton area, his father having worked at the Supermarine aircraft factory of Spitfire fame and John working in the print trades on leaving school. He found a kindred spirit in Joy; they married and spent almost 48 years together.

For someone most at home within the boundaries of the New Forest, John, always with Joy, travelled at home and abroad extensively, sometimes with a little gentle persuasion from Joy. This is how they became involved with the CTA and other similar groups. The Bradford Widescreen Weekend was an annual favourite and probably all of the CTA visits since joining.

On a birthday trip to see the Spruce Goose seaplane, their hotel was across the street from Paul Allen's Seattle Cinerama and another to Philadelphia found the SS United States laid up and the Atlantic City Convention Centre tour revealed the seven-manual organ and workshop. But John was probably happiest on the ferry across Southampton water en-route to the Isle of Wight or on one of Ray Ritmeester's Routemaster bus trips.

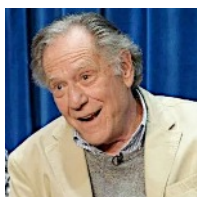
Due to Covid lockdown regulations, a trio of CTA members attended the funeral with tripods left at the door and from the rest of us, "Cheerio John, it was a pleasure knowing you".

Mike Wood

NECROLOGY

GEORGE SEGAL 87

His screen credits include *A Touch of Class* with Glenda Jackson, for which he won a Golden Globe, *The Owl and the Pussycat* with Barbra Streisand and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* with Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor, for which he was nominated for an Oscar.



YAPHET KOTTO 81

The 6ft 4in actor became the first black villain in the James Bond 007 series in *Live and Let Die* as the dapper Caribbean dictator Dr Kananga and his alter ego Mr Big. He was also in *The Thomas Crown Affair* and *Alien*. He was nominated for an Emmy for his portrayal of Ugandan despot leader Idi Amin in *Raid on Entebbe*.



MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new members: John Kyriacou, Nick Sproston, Jonathan Cooper, Joe Nutting, David Mackie and Diane Burstein.

DONATIONS

Once more members have displayed their generosity by adding a donation to the renewal of their subscriptions. Our sincere thanks go to: G Balmer, WA Bates, PT Bayley, AL Body, DP Brown, W Burns, PJ Chester, J Clarkson, P Cooper, GE Cranch, LJ Deacon, G Dutton, IC Ewers, PJA Ferrari, RJ Fox, PH Garrick, GC Gibson, A Goodwin, P Hamer, MH Hester, CE Hide, GF High, A Hodson, M James, SA Jarvis, K Johnston, SB Kay, M King, JM Knight, K Lees, RC Lobb, A Maltby, R McArdell, RL Maudsley, AE McCann, TD Mills, MD Moratti, JW Perkins, JE Prickett, S Quick, PJ Roberts, NJ Ruben, JM Seligmann, DA Warner, GJ Wheeler, J Wootton and MJT Yallop.

IN MEMORIAM

We have been sorry to learn since the last issue of the Bulletin of the deaths of the following members: Stuart Smith from Sheffield, Brian Collins from Canvey Island and John Surtees from Southampton. Our sincere condolences are sent to their families and friends.

Ray Ritmeester, Membership Secretary

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ zonita.org.uk/history A history of the now-demolished Zonita cinema in Amptill (Beds). {44379}
- ★ youtu.be/kJ11HvUXJvU A compilation of Dolby sound trailers with links to other similar ones, including ATMOS & THX.
- ★ leadgatevillage.com/the-roxy-project A report on restoration at the Roxy Leadgate [Durham]. See also a *Newcastle Chronicle* story at tinyurl.com/3kpwu6ju. {51014} Sent in by Darron Keeling.
- ★ tinyurl.com/vcwwd4hz From the *Liverpool Echo* – some of Merseyside's lost cinemas – 8 photos.
- ★ tinyurl.com/2p6y4jsf From *Aljazeera* – a project to document all 655 of India's endangered cinemas. Sent in by Bob Bradshaw.
- ★ youtu.be/NfMtdf5Mwec An 8½ minute video from 101 India – Mumbai's Liberty Cinema is one of the last few screens that still uses the reel projector – and the men who operate it. {33622}
- ★ youtu.be/_qhmjnNIA1A A 6¼ minute video – The rise and demise of Delhi's iconic Regal cinema {15781}. This and the above page contain links to other videos on some of India's cinemas.
- ★ youtu.be/lwsXaLBeQd0 A 6½ minute video – Inside the Booth at Film Forum, New York's leading independent cinema. {5957}
- ★ youtu.be/CehNqVhEs2Y A 24 minute video from the City of Westminster Archives. David Evans explores the most revolutionary change to hit the movie industry in the 1920s – the introduction of sound.
- ★ youtu.be/nSmAqsfNiTg A 17 minute video inside the abandoned Hulme Hippodrome [Manchester]. See p22 last Bulletin. {55576}
- ★ youtu.be/3uZYCb-kZWl 14¾ minutes of Pearl and Dean adverts, including the Ronnie Barker Kia-Ora. Page has links to a few more but search "pearl dean cinema adverts" for even more.
- ★ tinyurl.com/f65eba8 From *Kent Online* – What became of the lost cinemas of Sheppey, the Rio, Argosy and Ritz; 7 photos.
- ★ tinyurl.com/4x7793cb From the BFI – a list of 80 movies with pivotal scenes set in fictitious or real cinemas. Unfortunately not all the cinemas are identified. Sent in by Terry Hanstock
- ★ tinyurl.com/9p2b5sex From the *East Anglian Daily Times* – Saturday morning pictures in Suffolk – 8 photos. Sent in by Terry Hanstock
- ★ tinyurl.com/etu2dnme From Amersham Museum – the history of the Regent with photos. {44294} Sent in by Richard Jones.
- ★ www.clcoxford.co.uk/venue-hire The website of the Christian Life Centre based in the former Regal Cowley, Oxford. Several pictures of the interior, which is available to hire for conferences, wedding receptions and the like. {23827} Sent in by Richard Jones.

HOLIDAY SNAPS

By Ned Williams

I have just found some 1980s holiday snaps of cinemas – three in Cornwall and two in South Wales – names of the photo files are self-explanatory. I recall being particularly pleased to find the Cameo in Camborne as I had visited it in 1964 on a previous trip to Cornwall. We joined a packed Saturday night house to see a double bill of very cheap Sci-fi films, one of which was called *The Gargon Terror* [aka *Teenagers From Outer Space*].



The Palace Haverfordwest 1983



The Cameo Camborne in 1981 {49949}



The Palace Bodmin in 1981 {40160}



The Tower Launceston in 1981 {50102}



The Empire Milford Haven in 1983 {51149}

Ned also writes: Here is a photo of an example of some book-matches that I recently came across. They are promoting the Shipman & King cinema circuit – and it made me wonder how many circuits issued such items? Has any member collected such things? I am sure I once had a Rank Organisation set.

Your editor replies: I had some pictures of both matchbooks and match-boxes sent in by Ray Dolling in 2012. I think I printed a couple of examples (although I can't locate the Bulletin edition they were in) and kept the rest for use as fillers – but I don't think I used any of them. However, it was the best part of ten years ago so here they are again. Carl Chesworth also sent me a Rank one, which had "Film is Our Future" on the front but I can't find that either!

