



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

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July / August 2021



The Grade II listed former Odeon in Loughborough, where Beacon Bingo will not reopen – see Casework p6; photo taken May 2004



The Electric Birmingham, which will not reopen – see Newsreel p22



The Empire Great Yarmouth – see Newsreel p24

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Here in Harrogate the Nightingale Hospital has been stood down and the oxygen tanks that were hiding the façade of Matcham's Royal Hall have been removed – see photo p2 Bulletin 54/4. I understand the conversion cost £32m and it was never used for its intended purpose! In my last editorial I thought a Scottish member had made a typing mistake by referring to having a 'jag' instead of a 'jab'. It turns out that this was untrue and the two words are interchangeable north of the border; see the letter on p27. I'm sorry for jumping to conclusions.

I must also apologise to Anthony Smith for my typing error in his letter *Regent Redcar Memories* on p32 of the last Bulletin. His cinema career spanned 28 December 1965 to 24 March 2016 – not 2006 as I put. I know I've said this before but I must get a new keyboard!

I have had a tremendous response to the *What's in a Name* article in the last issue with dozens of additional unusual names sent in. Unfortunately I have run into the 'multiple of four pages' problem yet again so I have decided to leave all the replies until next time, as I probably won't have as much material available. I hope the results will be worth the wait! There are also a couple of holiday snaps and other items that I have had to hold over.

If you would like an electronic copy of any photo you see here in the Bulletin, please just email me (address opposite) and I will send it as an attachment, at the full size and resolution I have available.

Finally, thanks to 'TS' for the letter with encouraging comments about an article in Bulletin 55/2. I hope there is something of interest in this issue.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

NECROLOGY

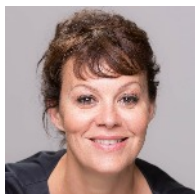
OLYMPIA DUKAKIS 89

She won an Oscar at the age of 56 for best supporting actress in *Moonstruck*. In 1969 she played the mother of Dustin Hoffman in *John and Mary* and was Jack Lemmon's wife in *Dad* in 1989. In the same year she won acclaim for her role in *Steel Magnolias*.



HELEN McCrORY 52

Her film debut came in 1994 with the role of '2nd whore' in *Interview With The Vampire*. In the *Harry Potter* films she played Draco Malfoy's mother, Narcissa. She was Cherie Blair in *The Queen*. Bond fans will remember her as Home Secretary Clair Dower in 2012's *Skyfall*. On the small screen she has been in *Peaky Blinders*.



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Zoom talks and presentations platform

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

BULLETIN: Members are invited to submit items for possible publication to the

Bulletin Editor. However, it is stressed that the publication of an item

does not necessarily imply that it reflects the views of the

Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor.

It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise;

items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor.

Please state if you require items to be returned and enclose SAE,

otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.

VISITS: Members and non-members are reminded that they attend visits

entirely at their own risk and no responsibility can be accepted by the

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PRODUCTS: The Cinema Theatre Association does not necessarily

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Riverside Road, London, SW17 0BA www.ludo.co.uk

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
FRIDAY 20 AUGUST

CTA VIRTUAL TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Please note that there are no talks or events scheduled for August as we take a summer break.

Season of Talks:

Notable Cinema Architects

September starts a fascinating season of monthly Zoom talks, each showcasing notable cinema architects and their works. Talks will be given by key presenters including lecturers and partners in well-known practices associated with award-winning cinema designs. These talks will range from the pioneering iconic designs from the twenties and thirties through to contemporary and innovative styles used for the latest multiplexes etc. All talks are fully illustrated and include rare source material.

Talk No 10, Saturday 4 September at 5:30pm (UK time)

CURVES AND STREAMLINES – THE WORKS OF ARCHITECT FRANK E BROMIGE BY BRUCE PETER



Dominion Harrow at opening in 1936 (latterly ABC / Safari)

The recent de-cladding of the spectacular frontage of the former Dominion cinema in Harrow provides an opportunity to re-assess the career of one of the more lively of 1930s cinema architects in Britain – Frank E Bromige, who in the latter 1930s attracted attention for the bulging, expressionistic façade designs he produced, usually also involving the use of large expanses of Crittall glazing and original fonts for the name signs.

CARTOON CORNER



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



Many of Bromige's distinctive works were associated with a group of cinemas bearing the title 'Dominion' (and he was also active with cinema designs in some of Kent's seaside towns). Also, who can forget the Rio Dalston as one of his impressive conversion schemes?

This presentation will consider the design origins and inspirations behind Bromige's designs and how they addressed popular ideas of modernity, as also found in the details of filmsets themselves. It will consider the re-use of his more important buildings, several of which survive and with their important design features intact.

Finally, it will briefly address Bromige's subsequent career as a designer for Stead & Simpson and WH Smith.

Bruce Peter is Professor of Design History at The Glasgow School of Art. He became interested in Bromige's work when a postgraduate student in London in the mid-1990s.

OPEN CHAT SESSION

Once the main event has finished, stay on and join us in the popular 'pub chat' session discussing cinema related topics of your choosing that you would like to share with others; feel free to join in, or just enjoy listening – you are welcome in any situation. This is an open-ended session so you can leave whenever other activities call. The session closes when either the conversation or the virtual pub bar runs dry!

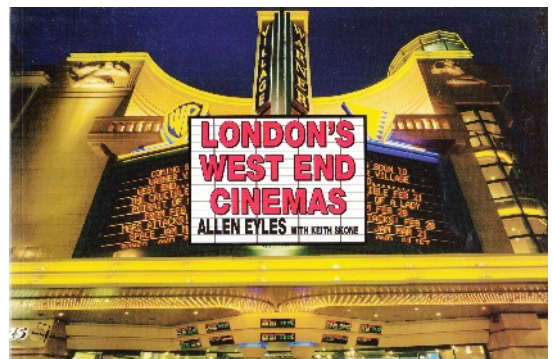
BOOKING THIS TALK

CTA talks and presentations are open to everyone – members and non-members alike. Booking is done online using TicketSource www.ticketsource.co.uk Simply enter 'cinema theatre' in their search box. Tickets are Members: £3 and Non-Members: £5 (per device). Please ensure that you complete the registration link that accompanies your TicketSource confirmation.



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 showcases 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

VISITS

Back to the West End

After 18 terrible months, to initiate some live events we are proposing a walk exploring the cinemas of the West End, to be on an afternoon in late September or early October 2021 and to be led by Richard Gray. The walk will commence outside the Leicester Square ticket booth on the south side of the square. Please assemble on the gardens side of this building.



The Odeon Luxe Leicester Square in March 2019

Although well-known to CTA members, it is hoped that a walk through the area will be of interest. The cinemas in Leicester Square and their preceding theatres will be described, such as the Odeon, the Empire and the Vue, together with the vestigial remains of others. In the south-west corner, the replacement hotel and cinema on the site of the Leicester Square Theatre / Odeon West End is nearing completion.



Passing along Coventry Street we look at the West End Cinema Theatre, known as the Rialto when still a cinema but now a casino and a Grade II-listed building. Almost opposite is the Prince of Wales theatre, never showing film full-time but designed by Robert Cromie, a leading cinema architect of the 1930s.

We turn left into Haymarket and pass the office building created from the Capitol of 1925, later the Gaumont and later still an Odeon but consigned to a basement. This interior is said to still exist. Beyond, on the right, is what is now the Empire but for most of its life was known as the Carlton, made famous as the Twentieth Century-Fox premier venue in London. Here a huge recent conservation battle was fought by the CTA and SAVE, after being threatened with demolition by the ground landlord, the Crown Estate but a Grade II listing was achieved and the Empire will now survive the regeneration of the surrounding offices. It may be possible to visit the interior (alternative interior visits would be to either the Regent Street Cinema at the farthest end of the street or the Prince Charles cinema off Leicester Square).

We continue to Piccadilly Circus to view the London Pavilion building, now looking rather neglected but for many years the London showcase for United Artists, although in essence a Victorian Grade II listed theatre. Opposite is the Criterion theatre, never a cinema but notable as London's only totally underground playhouse. On the corner of Regent and Jermyn Streets is the Plaza, built by Paramount as a magnificent film palace but now mainly devoted to Tesco's, with a small Vue basement miniplex. Hidden away just off the Circus is the Piccadilly theatre where Warner Brothers previewed sound films in 1928. Beyond the Regent Street quadrant we take in the New Gallery, now Burberry's clothing emporium.

Historical notes to be provided.

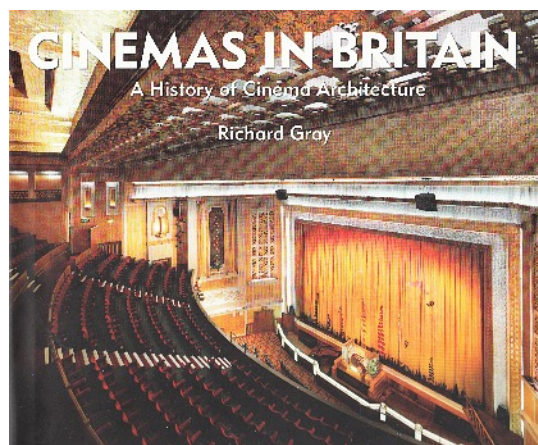
Full details in the September-October Bulletin.

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ tinyurl.com/m7avyadc a blog from the British Newspaper Archive; has a number of interesting images of cinemas.
- ★ youtu.be/81sBTd_IW20 a 6-minute video of the Gaumont Wood Green on bingo, taken during the CTA visit in August 1993.
- ★ tinyurl.com/4k26p53j a 9½-minute video from the East Anglian Film Archive of an *About Anglia* TV report in 1961 visiting some of the smaller cinemas in the region.
- ★ youtu.be/Ca_4dN8jrbg a 3-minute video inside the projection room of the Phoenix Finchley when still on film.
- ★ youtu.be/VLDYGpTl0qo a 7¼-minute video remembering John Stanbury, projectionist at the Tivoli Eastbourne in 1988.
- ★ youtu.be/8Vt87Hx1kyM an 8-minute video – questions and answers with John Watson, a Liverpool cinema projectionist.
- ★ youtu.be/OfHZri-sKa4 a 10¼-minute video – behind the scenes at the White Bus cinema Southend-on-Sea.
- ★ youtu.be/R7LNFN38R0o A 6-minute Pathé News item from 1958: Cinema Tax Must Go. A note below the video [click on *Show More*] contains a commentary and links to the locations in the film.
- ★ youtu.be/SvTa-U-mo54 Movietone News – CinemaScope comes to London; footage of the trade shows at the Odeon Tottenham Court Road in July 1953. *All above items sent in by Gary Donaldson*
- ★ tinyurl.com/tyad7r58 From the *Kentish Towner* – a possible link between the Forum Kentish Town and Mussolini. *sent in by Terry Hanstock*
- ★ tinyurl.com/2ydawbyx From the *Coventry Telegraph* – Coventry's golden era as the City of cinemas; 8 photos.
- ★ youtu.be/IpR203edLIE Barry Norman's 4½-minute report from BBC's *Film 86* on the opening of The Point in Milton Keynes.
- ★ tinyurl.com/44k7st3f From *The Star* – nearly 50 pictures of Sheffield Cinemas from the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s & 90s.

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 p.5.

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 Darwin; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New Victoria Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	Beaufort Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophone lighting; Imitations of Odeon; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; The Clifton Circuit; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the Electric Palace Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated Cinemas; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; Palace Conwy; Carlton Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two Regals; Odeon North Finchley; Majestic Oxford; Films at the Royal Albert Hall.
No 40	£6.00	Tolmer Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham – a Granada man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50 th Anniversary; Plaza Stockport; Majestic Leeds; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Pascal J Stienlet.
No 42	£6.00	Odeon Elephant & Castle, Plaza Crosby; Depot Lewes; Cineworld Chelsea; Gaumont Sheffield Figures.
No 43	£6.00	Virgin Cinemas; Peter Jewett's ABC memories; Scala Kings Cross; Picture House Campbelltown; Beeston/Nottingham memories.
No 44	£6.00	Village Cinemas of NE Scotland; William Keys' career; Bernard Snowball's 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

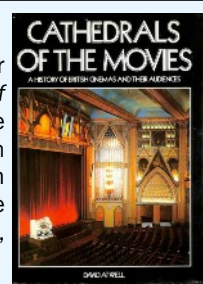
These binders are to a new, revised design, which should allow easier storage for the more recent thicker copies of the magazine. The 'Wirex' system allows copies to be inserted easily and removed if required. There are twelve wires per binder, although the number of copies that can be inserted may vary 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.

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).



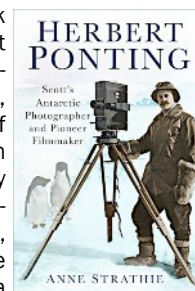
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For post and packing: total order value up to £20.00 please add £3.40, total order value from £20.01 to £40.00 please add £4.40, total order value from £40.01 to £60.00 please add £6.40. For larger orders and overseas, please contact the Sales Officer, 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.

Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

Herbert Ponting – Scott's Antarctic Photographer & Pioneer Film-maker by Anne Strathie. ISBN: 9780750979016. Published by the History Press. 272 pages, paperback, RRP £16.99. (but cheaper through Amazon and usual sources)

Herbert Ponting (1870-1935) was a young bank clerk when he bought an early Kodak compact camera. By the early 1900s he was living in California, working as a professional photographer, known for stereoview and enlarged images of America, Japan and the Russo-Japanese war. In 1909, back in Britain, Ponting was recruited by Captain Robert Scott as photographer and film-maker for his second Antarctic expedition. In 1913, following the deaths of Scott and his South Pole party companions, Ponting's images of Antarctica were widely published and he gave innovative 'cinema-lectures' on the expedition. When war broke out, Ponting's offers to serve as a photographer or correspondent were declined but in 1918, he, Ernest Shackleton and other Antarctic veterans joined a government-backed Arctic expedition. During the economically depressed 1920s and 1930s, Ponting wrote his Antarctic memoir, re-worked his Antarctic films into silent and 'talkie' versions and worked on inventions. Like others, he struggled financially but was sustained by correspondence with photographic equipment magnate George Eastman, a late-life romance with singer Glæ Carrodus and knowing that his images of Antarctica had secured his place in photographic and filmmaking history.



The author visited the CTA Archive for research and the CTA is acknowledged. Anne wrote to our archivist, Clive Polden: "Many thanks for help at the archive. For what it's worth you can assure your members that there are plenty of early cinemas in the book, including the Regent Street Polytechnic (Ponting's last film was shown there in 1933, by which time it had been fully fitted out as a cinema), early cinemas round Oxford Circus, Marble Arch Pavilion and the purpose-built Southport Cinema (c.1915-6)".

HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II Listed



It is reported that the Central Picture Theatre / King Edward in Blackpool is to be converted into an 'artisan market' as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme. The 'Arts and Crafts' style exterior constitutes the cinema's most notable extant feature; minimal internal detailing survives. An acceptable utilisation of the building may thus be advanced by this enterprise. [photo taken September 2003](#)

Unauthorised work at the Ritz in Ilkeston has culminated in the destruction of the plasterwork embellishing its foyer. Following discovery of this mutilation, the CTA contacted Erewash Borough Council, the enforcement officer of which halted any further injurious activity pending submission of a related planning application. It is reported that the objective of the new owner is to employ the structure as an office and training facility.

The gratifying report concerning the listing of the Abbey in the Wavertree area of Liverpool has been somewhat tempered by the perpetual inconsistency of Historic England in its criteria for assessment: cinemas of equal or greater architectural merit, exemplified by the Regal in Sunderland, have been declined this status routinely. It is evident that associative value assumes greater import during evaluation than architectonic quality – the Abbey has links to a popular music ensemble. The Association is to confer with The Heritage Alliance, raising the possibility of a joint approach by its constituents to Historic England on this recurrent issue.

The Odeon in Loughborough closed in March. Operator Beacon Bingo is concentrating its endeavours within purpose-built venues and is consequently leasing out its other properties. Currently no applications for alterations to the aforementioned building are under consideration. [photo on front cover](#)

The scheme for the Carlton, now Empire, in London's Haymarket is to proceed, yet with a delayed commencement date of early 2022. The Crown Estate has been urged to publicise its plans for the area on the surrounding hoardings, specifically including recognition of the original cinema's incorporation within the enterprise.

An online presentation to the local Civic Society detailing the latest proposals for the Regal in Kingston-upon-Thames has been conducted. Resultant opinion upon the updated designs is less than favourable.

The local Council has received no request for pre-application discussions concerning reconstruction of the Regent in Lyme Regis since 2017. The Association has issued a press release in an attempt to stimulate publicity from media outlets serving the region.

A similar media campaign by the CTA relating to the Granada in Shrewsbury has met with a degree of success, as a proposition to subdivide and restructure the cinema's interior as apartments has been aborted. Meanwhile, it is not known if the previously functioning bingo operation will resume following relaxation of Covid-19 restrictions.



The Grand in Southport remains unoccupied; its deterioration and security elicit disquietude. It is reported that the current owner has approached the local Council with a tentative plan for reuse; a watching brief will thus be maintained. [photo taken July 2007](#)

Unlisted

Refurbishment of the Brontë in Haworth has been promulgated by a potential operator, who has contacted the Association for advice. As previously reported, this cinema has been included as a local asset on a draft Neighbourhood Plan. The structure has lain empty for several years, although extant attributes are believed to include the original proscenium and paybox.

It had been intended that the shell of the only surviving section of the original structure of the Regent in Hinckley should remain following a conversion exercise; the auditorium block was lost some years ago. However, removal of the domed ceiling from the surviving upper crush foyer during this process has caused structural instability; work has thus been halted whilst the situation is assessed.

Save Britain's Heritage has convened a working-group to formulate potentialities for reutilisation of the Sandonia in Stafford, which the Association has previously attempted to safeguard with an emphasis upon retention of the impressive neo-classical white stone façade. Concurrently a local campaign for its conservation is also making some headway. See photo p5 Bulletin 52/6.

The Imperial in Walsall originated as an agricultural hall in 1868, was later converted to a cinema and has recently operated as a hostelry of the JD Wetherspoon chain. This operation has now terminated and concern arises for the building's future prospects. By virtue of the age of the edifice, the CTA will work in tandem with the Victorian Society on this case.

Demolitions in Brief

- ◆ Permission has been granted to demolish the auditorium of the Palace in Lancaster, although the frontage, facing onto Dalton Square, will remain. Loss of the audience chamber is regrettable as it features attributes of definite quality.
- ◆ An application has been made to raze the early (1911), yet significantly altered, Cinematograph in Edmonton.
- ◆ Prior to the CTA becoming aware of the situation, permission was granted to demolish the Adelphi in Moston [Manchester], which is to be replaced by an apartment block. See photo p22 Bulletin 54/6.
- ◆ Although the façade of the Premier in Somercotes [Derbys] is to be preserved, permission for redevelopment of the remainder of the cinema into multiple dwellings has been granted, with a proviso that a sign on a flank wall shall be incorporated into the new erection. See photo p23 Bulletin 54/6.
- ◆ A development propounded for the site of the Majestic in Gravesend is intended to integrate the façade and frontal block into another ubiquitous block of flats, which is destined to replace the auditorium. Regrettably this unsatisfactory outcome represents the best such attainable in this case.

WELSH CASEWORK

By John Skinner
PALACE SWANSEA



The scheme being directed by the City Council, which has purchased the building, is to convert the building to open-plan office accommodation for small specialist businesses while retaining and restoring the original features of the theatre that have survived. This includes the original proscenium, the very rare cast iron balustrades on the lower balcony front and some original plasterwork, mainly on the side walls. The stage is rotten and will have to be replaced but the plan is to restore the original projection box at the rear of the upper balcony to facilitate the showing of films should the need arise. Currently, the front narrow end of the building is covered in scaffolding, which looks like they are about to replace the missing conical slate roof with a replica of the original. This must have been lost after a disastrous fire in March 1949, which destroyed the original stage and much above. All of the unsightly vegetation on the exterior has been successfully removed. Expected completion date of the project is October to December 2022. *photo taken August 2007*

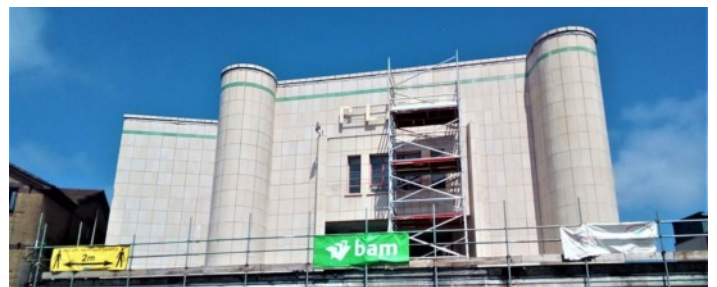
ODEON / CALON LLANELLI



The building has been purchased by local businessman and CTA member William Ratti, who aims to transform it into a multi-purpose entertainment complex with cinema, live music and a cafe bar in the spacious balcony foyer, similar to that in the Plaza Stockport. Progress with grant applications has been severely delayed by the pandemic so that the restoration of the façade and foyers has been placed on hold until grant aid is allocated. However, it has been necessary to replace two large sections of roof to ensure that the building remains watertight. Work has also been completed on the fire system to ensure that the building meets fire regulations. Meanwhile, on the former stage of Theatre Elli, previously screen ① in the original balcony extended forward, a piano bar with atmospheric décor made from props of former film sets has been constructed. This space will also allow the showing of films and small events for up to 76 people, allowing for social distancing. The intention is to open this space to the public at weekends in the late summer or early autumn to generate revenue. It is also possible that the former screen ② underneath the front stalls

of the theatre above will open later this year as a luxury cinema with seating for 150. *photo taken April 2010*

PLAZA PORT TALBOT



The Plaza in July 2008 and a recent photo with the cleaned façade

The scheme, directed by Neath Port Talbot Council, which has purchased the building, is to redevelop the building into a café, gymnasium and community space with office accommodation on the upper floor, to be managed by the YMCA. The auditorium has been demolished and the roof is now in place on the new build. The façade and foyer are to be retained and restored but this will be in the last six to eight weeks of the project due to the amount of construction traffic passing through the front entrance. The faience tiling has been cleaned and they are waiting on samples of replacement tiles and testing different types and colours to repair and replace where necessary. They are doing the same to the cracked terrazzo at the front entrance and to the mosaic tiles on the foyer floor. The brass window frames to the commercial units each side of the main entrance will be one of the last things done. The paybox timber is rotten and will have to be replaced but the frame is sound. Advice is being sought from CADW to find replica brass handles to the main entrance doors which were stolen when intruders accessed when the building was boarded-up. Scheduled date for completion is October 2021.

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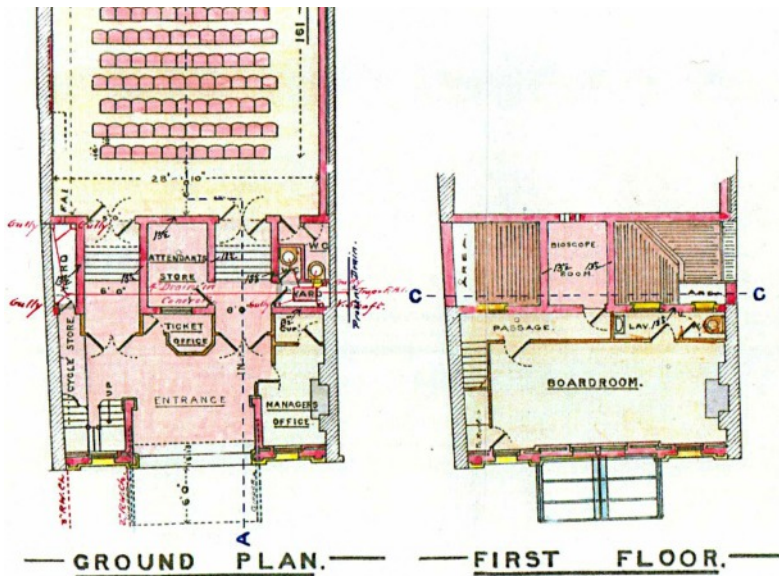
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PICTUREDROME / REGAL / ODEON, 16 SOUTHGATE STREET, BATH – Part 1

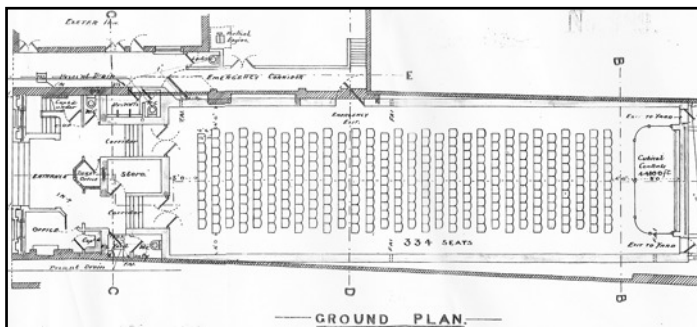


Entrance – 1911 plans for the Picturedrome – FOH



By Ben Doman

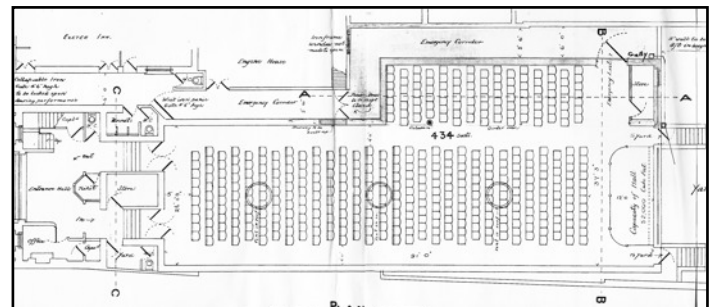
On 7 October 1910, the *Bath and Wilts Chronicle & Herald* carried an announcement that due to the success of the floatation of the Bath Electric Theatre Co, which ran the **Electric Theatre** in Westgate Street, work would be starting without delay on a second theatre in Southgate Street. Premises at No16 Southgate Street were purchased and plans drawn in January 1911 for the **Cinematodrome** show a rather narrow auditorium, with exits either side of the screen into a yard at the rear and seating for 334 people. A letter dated 13 December 1910 to the Corporation notes that an agreement had been made for an 8-year lease on a 5ft right of way through to Newark Street. A further letter, dated 17 January 1911, notes that they were unable to purchase the land to the rear and that they would like to enter into an agreement with the owner of No15 (the Exeter Inn) to utilise a 5ft 6in passageway between the premises as an emergency exit way. By the time the new theatre opened, now to be known as the **Picturedrome**, a portion of the former Exeter Inn had been incorporated into the building. The extra seating area was on the left of the stalls and started from just before the middle of the hall. The theatre opened on Wednesday 21 June 1911.



Original design for the rather narrow building.

Keene's *Bath Journal* of Saturday 24 June 1911 announced: "The **Picturedrome** – The License Granted. At a special meeting of the Bath Licenses Justice on Wednesday ... the new **Picturedrome** in Southgate Street was licensed in the name of Mr Arthur Hales, the manager of the Bath Electric Theatre Company. Mr BR Vachell made the application, which was for a full public entertainment license – for music, dancing and singing. He explained that the new theatre was erected on the site of No16 Southgate Street and he added that he did not think he was divulging any great secret when he said that the **Electric Theatre** at 22 Westgate Street, had been a great success. The theatre was unable to accommodate all the people who patronized it and the company determined to enlarge the scope of their operation, with the result that they acquired No16 Southgate Street. Plans were prepared

by ... Bennett and Bolwell, architects of 4 Terrace Walk and now a large and handsome building, built with Bath Stone, had been erected. What particularly concerned the Justice in connection with these applications was the safety of the public and this generally depended upon the exits. His instructions and his own view, formed after an inspection of the premises – were that the directors had given very great considerations to the safety of the public – which had been very jealously guarded. It was at first intended to make the emergency exit into a passageway but this had to be abandoned as the passage was considered to be licensed property. His clients had now purchased additional land from the Corporation and had entered into an agreement with Mr Palliser, the licensee of the adjoining Exeter Inn, by which he had given up the house as a licensed house, so that there would be one fewer licensed house in Southgate Street and this was not a matter that the Justices were likely to deplore. The public would now be able to pass easily from the passage into the street. The passage exceeded the minimum width required. In some portions it was as wide as 6ft 9in, whereas the regulations were complied with if the passage was 5ft in width. He was told that all the regulations of the Justices had been complied with and very great care had been taken. The building itself would be one storey with the exception of a portion at the front, over which would be a room for the cinematograph. It was only necessary that there should be one exit but at the further end of the building there was another exit, which would only be used in case of emergency. Replying to the Bench, Mr Vachell explained that the application was only for a six days' licenses and the theatre would not be opened on Christmas Day or Good Friday."



Plans showing the seating extension to the left of the auditorium on opening, taking in part of the former Exeter Inn next door.

The report in Keene's goes on to give a description of the building. "There was a large attendance of shareholders and friends at a private exhibition of pictures given in the new theatre on Wednesday afternoon. A number of members of the Corporation and other prominent citizens were present. Some interesting views of the Tunis Exhibition were

PUBLIC FIXTURES.

ELECTRIC THEATRE, WESTGATE STREET, BATH.

Continuous Performances. Daily 3 p.m. to 11 p.m.
ALL THE BEST & LATEST PICTURES.
 Times and Prices:—Afternoon, between 3 p.m. and
 6 p.m., Admission 6d. (including Tea). Evening, between
 8 p.m. and 11 p.m., Admission 3d. and 6d. Children
 Half-Price Afternoons only.
Programme Changed every Monday and Thursday.
Over 4,000 Feet of Pictures Every Hour.

"PICTUREDROME," SOUTHGATE STREET, BATH, NOW OPEN.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE DAILY,
 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.
 Prices of Admission—Front Seats 3d., Back Seats 6d.
 1184

Press advert for the opening of the Picturedrome in June 1911 with 'over 4,000 feet of pictures every hour' advertised at its sister theatre, the Electric in Westgate Street

shown followed by an exciting series showing how the life of a man who, when crossed in love, impulsively declared that he hated the opposite sex, was saved by the heroism of a women.

Mr FH Milsom (Chairman of Directors) gave an address during an interval in the programme, in which after extending a cordial welcome to the shareholders, he congratulated them most heartily upon having received that morning their license from the magistrates ... There was one thing he very much regretted and that was that the King and all the crowned heads of Europe were not with them this afternoon ... But he promised one and all that they would be with them on the screen on Friday evening next. There was a saying that "seeing is believing". Well, those who were interested in their entertainments must have noticed at their theatre in Westgate Street, the queues, night after night waiting for seats, because their theatre was not large enough... He was of opinion the building, although a private one, showed that Bath was waking up."

The fact that the theatre had already been, rather awkwardly, enlarged and the comments of the Chairman of Directors show the huge popularity in this new form of entertainment and the race by theatre owners to extend capacity. It was also noted that the previous building had been demolished and the new theatre built in just twelve weeks. The article goes on:

"Mr. Bannister Howard [who transferred from the Westgate Street theatre], the managing Director, who also addressed the meeting, spoke of the many difficulties that the directors had experienced since the building was projected in October last. In his 25 years' experience as a public caterer, he thought that he had never had to meet with such difficulties, one after the other and he was naturally pleased that morning when he heard that a full license had been granted to them without any restrictions ... As Managing Director of the Bath Electric Theatre Company and naturally having the interests of the shareholders at heart, he felt very much hurt when the work had been delayed, they should have been open in January or at any rate February and consequently they had lost nearly four months' profit. He then went on to allude to the opposition to the license and pointed out the emergency exit to which exception was taken, as it led into the passage of the Exeter Inn. Was it conceivable that if the place was on fire and the emergency door was used the people rushing out would stop and have a drink at the public house?... That however was what they thought, or someone thought and the consequence was their building was delayed another eight weeks. They could not get over the difficulty raised and they had bought the public house and shut it up... There was no doubt that the Cinematograph world was rapidly advancing. Ten years ago he saw the same sort of entertainment in Paris. It had only been established about three or four years in London but it had rapidly advanced and he believed that as yet it was only in its infancy.

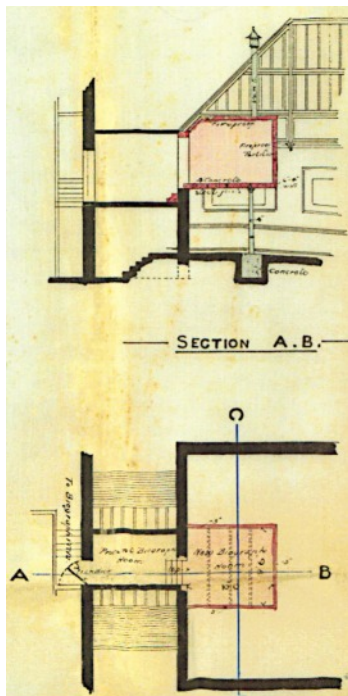
There was now what were called ciné-colour pictures and he intended that this novelty would in all probability shortly be introduced at their theatre in Westgate Street.

Of course the Westgate Street Theatre would still go on. He was quite certain that there was room for two buildings – he did not say more – but there was room for two places of that class of amusement in the City of Bath. That was proved he thought, by the fact that since they had been in Westgate Street there had hardly been a single evening when money had not been turned away. In the ciné-colour picture every colour, say in the Royal procession, whether blue, brown, yellow or red, would be exactly reproduced by this new process and he thought that in Westgate Street they might devote half an hour of the programme to an exhibition of these colour pictures, so that they would have a distinct feature at the Westgate Street Theatre. He mentioned that at the Picturedrome they intended having explanations for school children each Wednesday and Saturday afternoon, when admission would be at a nominal price. There was no doubt about the educational value of the cinematograph. They had educational pictures from all parts of the world and they were far more interesting to children than having to spend hours upon what children termed "their old books". He concluded by assuring the shareholders that he and his brother directors would do everything in their power to make the Bath Electric Theatre Company a very fine and he believed a very great success ... He thought he should mention that the whole of that building had been carried out by Bath people. That had two enterprising young Bath architects, they had had Bath contractors and Bath workmen and, as they saw outside, they had had the famous Bath stone ... The company was then invited to take tea and other refreshments, after which they settled down to the enjoyment of the second half of the programme.

The front of the building is in the Ionic style with three pediments on the top. An illuminated porch projects over the pavement and three arc lamps are used to illuminate the front at night. The entrance hall is laid with Terrazzo mosaic. On either side are large mirrors with borders of fibrous plaster bearing very pleasing designs. The box office is situated in the centre of the porch and is glazed with decorated green glass. On the right is the manager's office and gentleman's lavatory and on the left is a ladies' cloakroom and a staircase leading to the Boardroom and the operating room. The entrance to the theatre is to the right of the box office and there are also two exits as well, one of which leads into the yard at the rear and into the main street by a side passage. The theatre is 93ft long and 26ft at the narrowest portion, with a wider portion of 37ft 6in and seating accommodation is provided for 423 persons. The floor of the hall slopes at a gradient of one in fifteen to the screen, so that the necessity of ladies removing their hats is avoided. The seats are so placed as to give a clear and uninterrupted view of the picture, which is projected onto a screen of 14ft by 11ft. The large hall is decorated in green with brick red panels and brown ceiling, thus giving a very restful and comfortable appearance. In the roof are three sliding louvre roof windows to permit the emission of smoke and five air shafts, while around the walls are other air shafts to permit of adequate ventilation. The proscenium is decorated on either side with medallions and on the top there is a medallion and leaves of fibrous plaster. Both gas and electric lights are used to light the theatre, the brackets being placed alternately round the building. Near the screen is a retiring room for use in the event of meetings being held there. For the present the music will be contributed by a Baby Grand pianoforte. A special room has been provided for the attendants. The operating room has been made absolutely fire-proof and safety shutters, which operate with the opening of the door, are supplied in the event of a fire breaking out. The machine is a Gaumont Model de Luxe of the very latest pattern, with Urban arc lamp. The Boardroom is decorated with green and brown and is admirably fitted up. The directors of the company have spared no efforts to make the theatre thoroughly up-to-date. The architects were ... Bennett and Bolwell of Terrace Walk and ... Erwood and Morris were the builders. The electric lighting was carried out by ... Kendall and the gas by the Bath Gas Company."

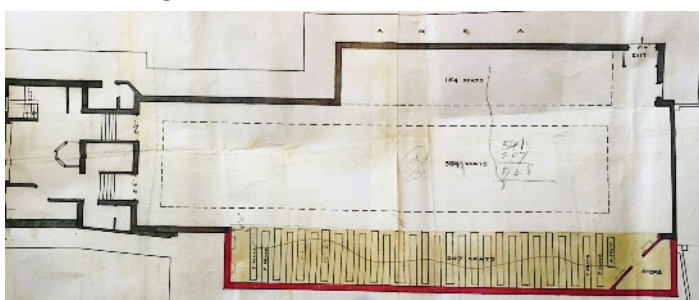
The new venture of the Bath Electric Theatre Company must have been doing well, as a report in *Keene's Bath Journal* of 16 December 1911 stated - "The Picturedrome – The work of extending the Picture-drome is proceeding apace and it is hoped to open the enlarged hall before Christmas. Meanwhile the comfort of patrons is not forgotten and despite the alterations which have been in progress, no inconvenience has been caused to visitors ..."

The extension works consisted of extending the stage end into the rear yard and demolishing the existing stage and adjoining store. Where there had previously been an exit either side of the screen, now the right-hand doorway was not reinstated. The screen was still off-centre but lining up with the centre of the original narrow part of the hall. The extension gave an additional 150 seats, taking the capacity to 584 seats. The projection room was also moved at this time, a new room being built out over the rear seats on two stilts, in front of the existing biograph box, which now formed its entrance. The new, wider projection room was 10ft wide by 9ft 6in deep and allowed the installation of two projectors. The floor was 4in thick concrete and the walls were 3in thick concrete. Work had commenced on 17 November 1911.



Plans for a new wider projection room to accommodate two projectors, just six months after opening. The new room was built out over the rear seats and used the original projection room as its entrance.

At the November 1914 shareholders meeting there was a discussion on the problem of overcrowding, which had almost resulted in the Justice withdrawing the licenses. The issue raised by the Justice was that the gangways were not being maintained. This was apparently due to leaving patrons getting distracted by the action on screen and standing in the aisles to watch the film. The company had entered into negotiations for extra land that would provide an extra several hundred seats. In January 1915, plans in the Bath Archives show a further extension to the ground floor. An additional 207 seats to the right of the stalls by architect Mowbray A Green of Bath, on premises to the right of the theatre, previously known as 17 Southgate Street. This extension was opposite the earlier one on the left but started much further back, giving the hall a very uneven shape. The seating capacity was now 791. These alterations were paid for by the sale of the Electric in Westgate Street.



Plans for a second seating extension to the right of the auditorium in 1915, giving the auditorium a rather awkward shape.

It was noted in the shareholders' meeting that it had been a tough trading year. The management of the Coliseum had been giving away free tickets to try and entice patrons away from the Picturedrome and the Electric. There had also been a strike by the musicians that had lasted several months.

At an extraordinary general meeting of the shareholders on 15 March 1920 Francis Milsom, acting as Managing Director, was authorized to issue 2,000 £1 shares to raise £2,000. No details of the reason for this are mentioned but there is a note in the Bath Archives that plans for further alterations and additions were passed in August 1920. Considering the huge expense, this would probably have been for the addition of the balcony and relocation of the projection room from the first to the second floor. The entrance to the new balcony was through the original projection room. The barrel-vaulted ceiling that the cinema had up to its closure would also seem to date from these works. The balcony was not on the plans from the 1915 extension but mention is made in a 1929 press advert of the 'grand circle', predating the next alterations in 1930.



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Great and Gorgeous Singing Spectacle:—

“GOLD DIGGERS OF BROADWAY”

Rivals the Rainbow in Colour. Thrills with its radiant beauties.
100% Natural Colour, Singing, Talking, Dancing Picture.
with **WINNIE LIGHTNER, CONWAY TEARLE, NICK LUCAS, ANN PENNINGTON** and Chorus of 100 Dazzling Beauties
New Heights in Glorious Entertainment
Positively your last opportunity of seeing this wonderful picture in Bath

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Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 6 to 10.30. Matinees: Thursday at 3, Saturday at 2.30

“KISSING CUP RACE”

A British Talkie of the World's Greatest Racing Poem, with **STEWART ROME** and **MADELEINE CARROL**. Also **MARGUERITE DE LA MOTTE** in
“MONTMARTRE ROSE” (Silent Film)

‘100% natural colour, singing, talking, dancing picture’
showing at the Regal in 1929 whilst the Oldfield Cinema
is showing the silent film *Montmartre Rose*.

To accompany the silent action on screen, a Mr Billy Isacs played piano. The drive for newer, bigger and better came in the shape of ‘The Electramonic Orchestra’ (early form of gramophone player) which made Mr Isacs’ piano redundant. Metal tickets of different shapes for different seating areas were used right up until 1930.

An advert in the *Bath & West Chronicle and Herald* on Monday 22 September 1930 stated - “New Regal Picture House - Wanted, 5 smart young ladies as attendants, one commissionaire, smart, young lad as attendant also page boy - apply personally, between 10 and 11am Tuesday next at Picturehouse.”

The advert caused quite a response from young ladies wanting to be a part of the Hollywood glamour, as the *Chronicle and Herald* reported on 23 September - “A single small advertisement in this paper was responsible for a queue of girls about 200 strong outside the Picturedrome this morning applying for posts. The Picturedrome is to be renovated and have talking picture apparatus installed, after which it will be opened under the name of “Regal”.”

The *Bath Chronicle & Herald* of Friday 3 October carried a picture of the girl attendants of the new Regal cinema, resplendent in their new blue and gold uniforms and pill-box hats. The cinema had reopened that day, with the proceeds again going to the Mayor's Hospital fund.

Western Electric sound equipment was fitted. The first sound film was *Happy Days*. The ladies' toilets on the balcony level were altered and extended and the manager's office was moved to the balcony level. An additional staircase was inserted to the right of the foyer, where the manager's office had previously been.

The REGAL

late PICTUREDROME
SOUTHGATE STREET, BATH.

This Theatre will be closed on September 22nd, for Re-decorating throughout and for the installation of

The Latest Sound Equipment

by
Western Electric

Grand Re-opening Performance
on
Friday, October 3rd,
at 7.30 p.m.
UNDER ENTIRELY NEW MANAGEMENT.

The Reopening of the Regal with Western Electric Sound in 1930

The REGAL SOUTHGATE STREET, BATH. 'Phone 3533

Grand Re-opening Programme: Friday, Oct. 3rd

VICTOR McLAGLEN, EDMUND LOWE, JANET GAYNOR and CHARLES FARRELL in All Star Talking and Singing Romance.

"HAPPY DAYS"

A Wonderful Story: scintillating with youth—Singing and Dancing through the Most Fascinating and Spectacular Musical Extravaganza ever presented.

Don't Miss Seeing the Amusement Treat of the Year

His Worship the Mayor (Colon. Aubrey Baileyman) has kindly consented to attend

The Entire Receipts for Friday, Oct. 3rd, will be devoted to the Mayor's Hospital Fund

Come to the Opening Day to See and Hear "HAPPY DAYS" and swell the Mayor's Hospital Fund, You'll never forget that Happy Day

Doors open at 2.0, Commence at 2.30. Seats Bookable without fee

BEAU NASH Western Electric Picture House, Westgate St., Bath. Phone 4330

"SILENCE IS GOLDEN—UNTIL OUR SCREEN SPEAKS"

TO-DAY and TO-MORROW ONLY (Please Note)

On the Screen of Sound You **MUST** see it

"THE VIRGINIAN"

with GARY COOPER and MARY BRIAN

We leave the description, the thrill, the laughter, to YOU

Also LEONARD HENRY in "THE MUSICAL BEAUTY SHOP"

MONDAY NEXT—THE MIGHTY "RIO RITA"

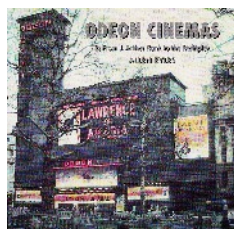
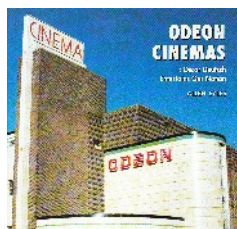
Grand reopening of the Regal in 1930, whilst the Beau Nash boasts "silence is golden – until our screen speaks"

Confusingly, the Picturedrome and Regal carry separate listings in the 1931 *Kiné Yearbook*, the Picturedrome owned by the Bath Electric Theatre Co and the Regal by Union Cinemas (which had been incorporated in 1928 and controlled 12 other cinemas at the time). They are still listed separately in 1932 but the confusion is cleared up in the 1933 edition as the Regal is listed as being booked by Union and owned by The Bath Electric Theatre Co, the cinema's owners utilising the larger company's booking power to gain more favourable booking terms. Union booked for the cinema up to 1935.

... to be continued; the coming of Odeon

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Available from the Sales Officer – address on p5.

MATCHBOXES

The pictures of matchbooks and matchboxes on the back cover of Bulletin 55/3 reminded me that Thorn EMI produced a series of ten matchboxes featuring ABC cinemas. The staff on the counter at the ABC, formerly Rembrandt Ewell were very patient while I sorted through their stock to find a complete set.

You can have no idea how long it took to line up the boxes and how many scans I had to do to get the image below. They seemed to move around out of alignment of their own accord.

Kevin Wheelan

Also sent in by Ray Dolling and Martin Tapsell

ABC Cinema, Aldershot - No. 1 in a series of 10



ABC Cinema, Bayswater, London - No. 2 in a series of 10



ABC Cinema, Croydon - No. 3 in a series of 10



ABC Cinema, Edgware - No. 4 in a series of 10



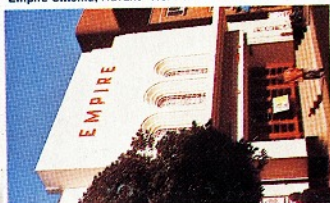
ABC Cinema, Fulham Rd., London - No. 5 in a series of 10



ABC Cinema, Harrow - No. 6 in a series of 10



Empire Cinema, Havant - No. 7 in a series of 10



ABC Cinema, Leeds - No. 8 in a series of 10



ABC Cinema, Romford - No. 10 in a series of 10



ABC Cinema, Leicester - No. 9 in a series of 10



Lonsdale Carlisle
sent in by Martin Tapsell



sent in by Carl Chesworth



sent in by Ray Dolling

WANDERINGS IN 2019

By Hugh Sykes

When daughter Clare was in Dublin in January, she came back with *The Herald*, in which there was an item about the Olympia theatre, which is where Laurel and Hardy gave their last ever performance during their 1950s tours of Britain and Ireland.

The Olympia has always been the people's theatre - as well as the best place in the City to see a gig. Inside and out, it still looks and feels like what it started out as: a music hall called *The Star of Erin*, which opened in 1879 and offered popular entertainment to the people of Dublin. It was renamed *Dan Lowery's* Music Hall two years later and in 1891 became *Dan Lowery's Palace of Varieties*, before acquiring its present name in 1923. As depicted in *Stan & Ollie*, Laurel and Hardy gave their last ever performance in the Olympia during their 1950s tours of Britain and Ireland.

The Herald - 25 January 2019 +



The Palace Picture House Shephed

Whilst on a visit to the Great Central Railway at Loughborough on 23 February, I ventured afterwards to Shephed for the former *Palace Picture House*. Found open as 'New & Nearly' retailing household items as per photo but little survives of its cinema days apart from a now split-level floor. Once a 600-seater, opened in 1913, the frontage was rebuilt in the 1930s. It finished on film in the 1970s. It was empty for a while then squash courts, bingo, then a sports club.

Ann bought me a train ticket for the *Cumbria Coast Express* on 16 March. I joined at Rugby for electric haulage 86259 *Peter Pan* to Carlisle then steam 48151 2-8-0 around the coast via Maryport, Barrow and Carnforth with 86259 back to Rugby. Only time to view the lovely Citadel Station in Carlisle and buy the local paper (with most welcome cinema adverts) and just a look outside with a Vue nearby.

Our steam locomotive and crew from West Coast Railways did a wonderful job around the coast line, passing Wigton, Aspatria, Maryport, Workington, Whitehaven, Millom, Barrow, Dalton-in-Furness, Ulverston, Grange-over-Sands and Carnforth. All had cinemas but I only caught sight of two: the rear and roof of one at Dalton-in-Furness and the *Palladium* at Millom.



The former seven-screen Odeon at Plas Coch, Wrexham

On 29 March we drove to Hunstanton in Norfolk for a day visit. We found the *Princess Theatre* on live shows only (then) and bought the local paper with further cinema information, most welcome, with a surprise - an art deco cinema within the Reindeer pub, Dereham Road in Norwich.

A further journey but west on 24 April was made to visit the Wrexham area, with a local paper for Caernarfon and Denbigh bought, which contained an advert for the *Galeri* and listings. Two former Odeons were viewed and photographed: (1) the original 1937 Odeon in Brook Street, where Ann's late father John (Jack) Lloyd was a page boy - see frontispiece *Odeon 1* by Allen Eyles. It closed in 1976 and the seven-screen replacement in 1997 at Plas Coch was now itself superseded in 2009 by No3, back in the town, with eight screens. How many towns have had this number?



The 1937 Odeon Wrexham



The Town Hall Glastonbury

And so, on to our mini break in Cornwall on 10 May. Not wishing to use the motorway, we journeyed down the Fosse Way to Cirencester, then Tetbury, past the former cinema (now toilets). We made a comfort stop at Bitton Station, home of the Avon Valley Railway, then via Keynsham and Shepton Mallet - no cinemas these days. Then to the Somerset town of Glastonbury, where we found the *Town Hall*, ex *Maxime* cinema; a 365-seater it remains in community use, a 'spring event' was being / to be held when we viewed externally.

We passed through Wellington and found the lovely single-screen *Wellesley*, fully open, on our way to the small Devon Railway Centre at Bickleigh for a short visit and comfort stop. Passing through Crediton, we first passed the *Palace*, which continues with snooker and a café, then further down in the shops area is the *Town Hall*, which screened films in the 1920s/30s, latterly the *TIC*.



The former Carlton Liskeard

Then onto our 'chalet' accommodation near Liskeard but on a farm, down a lane, down a lane, Cornwall style! Lovely. Next day, 11 May, I had promised Ann some small towns and villages and, being out of season, Polperro was first choice. With only about five cars in the car park, the place was virtually ours, that was until we approached the harbour, where an expensive-looking floating crane was attending to the harbour gate removal and replacement (seen on TV since). Not sure if any film venues were here?

Later that day we came back to Liskeard to find the **Carlton**, sadly found closed as 'The Cornish Ivy' but not boarded-up or derelict. 1950 KYB: Carlton, RCA Sound, The Parade, props EJ & WE Pope, 700 seats, booked at Carlton Tavistock, once nightly, mats Wed & Sat, priced 7d to 2/9, two changes weekly, station Liskeard (BR).



Before returning to the chalet we drove out to Callington for the cinema. A rather quiet town now, we found an event on in the local hall and a most helpful lady therein gave directions. I had parked in the wrong car park so we went to the next one, behind the shops and there was the stage door. On foot around the corner into Biscumbes



The Cinema Callington and rear entrance with stage door

Lane, which is an alleyway from the shops but vehicle access from the other end. The **Prim-Raf Theatre** stands halfway, being run by the Callington Amateur Dramatic Society. All kinds of fayre here, including occasional film screenings. 1950 KYB: pop 1,801, Cinema (Imperial) prop EL Honour, Polhaven Fort, Cawsand, Cornwall, 250 seats, not continuous, prices 1/- to 2/3, booked at Millbrook, films FTS.

An evening train excursion was taken, Gunnislake to Plymouth and back, which I can highly recommend, especially over Calstock viaduct – it's high!

12 May – a short journey to Mevagissey, again with the car park nearly empty, gave us a good visit with shops open and plenty of space. After a good walk around we ordered a freshly-made Cornish pasty and a local coffee, served by the harbour wall – most memorable. I did not find any cinema history here – or am I mistaken?

I bought the local *Falmouth Packet* newspaper, which gave me Falmouth Phoenix and Helston Flora listings but also an advert for the **Capitol** Bingo Club in St Austell [see p28 Bulletin 55/2]. We went past the **Capitol** – and can confirm that it was still open – on our way to Fowey. Parked at the top of the town and walked down, finding a hall with an exhibition therein. A most helpful steward knew of a cinema – but gone. The **Troy** was demolished some years ago and replaced with a house and garage with gates across the frontage. 1950 KYB: pop 2,130, Troy Cinema (RCA) phone Fowey 186, props Duchy Cinemas Ltd, 320 seats, booked at hall, one show nightly, mats Wed & Sat, prices 1/- to 2/3.



The Church Rooms Lostwithiel, with the remains of the Glyn on right

From Fowey our next location was Lostwithiel, where a lady on a bicycle was most happy to take us to the site of the **Glyn** cinema and tell us of the 'Church Rooms'. On the website of the Lostwithiel Film Society (which runs film shows) there are views of the rebuilding of the **Glyn** into flats, with a look inside the auditorium.

www.lostinfilm.org.uk/about-us/the-glyn-cinema

Opposite the church is Church Lane, where the Church Rooms are. Literally next door was the **Glyn**, of which one former fire exit with brickwork remains. The cinema site seems now to have a few small houses built on it.

Whilst in the area we did catch sight of the former **Palace Theatre** in St Blazey, a 350-seater now very rebuilt as flats. Ann and I called at the Bodmin and Wenford Railway and saw a traction engine steaming along the A38 into town – a lovely sight.



The Tivoli Tiverton

Coming home day was 13 May, with a few places to see. At Tavistock a local paper was bought, with an advert therein for the **Wharf**. A comfort stop at Tiverton, I went to the **Tivoli**. It was open but no publicity on the foyer doors. The street entrance name sign and film boards were there. The local film society now use the **Petroc College Theatre** instead. Also bought the *Bridgwater Gazette* with adverts for **Scott Cinemas**. Prior to leaving Tiverton, I had a look at the site of the former **Electric Theatre** in Newport Street, latterly a bingo club and now demolished, being replaced with flats.



The Palladium Midsummer Norton

Our last port of call on the way home was Midsomer Norton to see the **Palladium/Electric**, now **Wetherspoons**, open and had a look inside. A few auditorium ceiling beams survive but with a new central staircase for the upper-level toilets and kitchen below, there's not much to see and all the screen end is gone.

Later in the month, on 26 May, with a fellow narrow-gauge enthusiast, we travelled to Fairbourne for their 'Katie Gala'. As usual I bought the local *Cambrian News* with cinema listings. After enjoying, we moved on to the Bala Lake Railway at Llanuwchllyn to see their new Heritage Centre – it's excellent. Stopping next in Bala to view the proposed site of the Bala Town station, behind the closed **Neuadd Buddug** cinema. We visited the model railway exhibition, held in the local senior school, where film shows are supposed to take place. There is a roll-down screen and, I believe, a digital projector but the hall is multi-use with a flat floor. I hope the **Neuadd Buddug** reopens as soon as possible.



The Neuadd Buddug Bala

We afterwards called in at Corwen to view their new Station and the former Glyndwr cinema, still 50% DIY with 50% out of use and empty screen end. See p16 last Bulletin.



Michael Wooldridge at the Compton

For a 'musical' chine on 2 June I joined members and friends of the Cinema Organ Society for a concert on the 3m Compton organ (ex ABC/Tower West Bromwich) by Michael Wooldridge at the Fentham Hall, Hampton-in-Arden. A really superb afternoon with Michael and the Compton in fine form. Michael was tutored by the late Bobby Pagan, ex Regal Glasgow.



The Maltings Wells-next-the-Sea

My final report for these notes takes us back to Norfolk on 22 June for Wells-next-the-Sea and the Maltings with its large extension fully open and busy – lots of people.

All photos [except #] by the author

QUOTATIONS

More cinematic quotations from the list sent by Gavin McGrath:

◆ The appeal of cinema lies in the fear of death.

Jim Morrison

◆ I love British cinema like a doctor loves his dying patient.

Ben Kingsley

HULL NATIONAL UPDATE

Plans to transform the former National Picture Theatre will now go ahead following a successful funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The £277,600 grant will include repair and conservation work, as well as the restoration of the façade of the building alongside its heritage features. Its former auditorium will be used to create flexible space for events and as an education centre and a memorial allowing visitors to learn about the life of civilians in the Second World War. The project will also see the National Civilian World War II Memorial Trust (NCWW2MT) manage the site as a memorial to the impact the Second World War had on Hull, with a comprehensive educational and learning programme included.

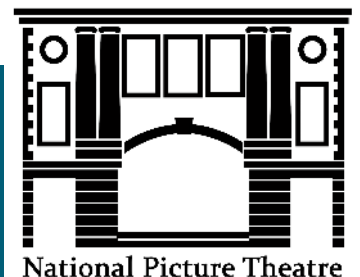


The NPT team on site: [L-R] Tracy Toner, David Alexander
Councillor Aneesia Akbar and Hilary Byers

A Council contribution of £178,300 as well as a contribution from the NCWW2MT will serve as match funding required for the delivery of the project. Councillor Aneesia Akbar, Chair of the National Picture Theatre steering group said: "We are delighted to have been successful in this project which will, for the first time since it was destroyed in World War II, allow the public to access the building safely. "There is so much history within the National Picture Theatre that is of national importance and to have the opportunity to give it the attention it deserves is fantastic. I would like to thank the National Lottery for recognising the significance of this project and the local community for their great support during the process." David Renwick, Director – England, North at The National Lottery Heritage Fund said: "It is fantastic news that thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to support the preservation of this important local landmark and provide opportunities for local communities and visitors to explore the past and create stories for the future. This is also part of a much bigger regeneration jigsaw. We are very proud to be playing a key role in the transformation of Hull, ensuring that the communities and places which shaped the City are at the heart of securing its future and showcasing the positive impact that heritage can have on the economic regeneration of the City."

The former National Picture Theatre was designed by architects Runton and Barry for the De-Luxe Theatre Company and was constructed in 1914. The building was badly damaged during a Luftwaffe air raid on 18 March 1941, although none of the 150 people inside the cinema at the time were killed or seriously injured. The former National Picture Theatre gained Grade II listed status in 2007 due to its significance as a rare surviving bomb-damaged building from the Blitz of the Second World War. Air raids on Hull went on longer than on any other British City and, out of Hull's 91,660 houses, only 5,945 survived the air raids undamaged. Remedial work to stabilise the building took place in 2020 and now the major works are scheduled to begin later this year.

Hull City Council Press Release – 26 May



National Picture Theatre

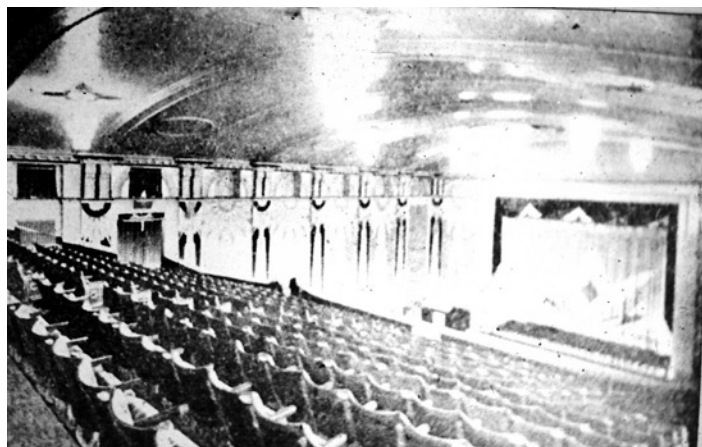
UNIDENTIFIED CINEMA PHOTOGRAPHS



Ref: 083 – no additional information



Ref: 147 – not the Rex Hindley



Ref: 546 – no additional information



Ref: A97 – possibly a CTA visit



Ref: AS6 – no additional information



Ref: D09 – large rear stalls c250 seats; a Rank conversion?



Ref: Int005 – no additional information

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 on the Flickr album 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).

THREE SOLVED FROM THE LAST BULLETIN:

100 Beaufort Birmingham, by Hugh Sykes and J Griffiths;
B21 Granada Kingston-upon-Thames, by Darron Keeling;
Int063 Savoy Picture Theatre Hull, by Roger Shone via David A Ellis;
(which also solved two others in the series, not shown but within the Flickr albums: Int1045 & Int1046, plus it gave Ian Grundy the solution to Int068, which was the same auditorium, prior to its 1937 refurbishment). This prompted David to write the article on the back page.

All in all, a fantastic result, so thank you, everybody, for having a look.

Darron Keeling

NATIONAL ANTHEM TRAILERS

By Kevin Wheelan

Playing the National Anthem at the end of a performance is said to have started at the Theatres Royal in Drury Lane and Covent Garden in 1745. It is, therefore, not surprising that the tradition was carried over to the cinema.



Whether the Anthem was accompanied by film of the two monarchs of the silent era, Queen Victoria and Edward VII, I have been unable to establish. However, National Anthem trailers were made for all those of the sound era – George V, Edward VIII, George VI and Queen Elizabeth II. They usually consisted of pictures of the Monarch but there were generic versions with the Union flag or military bands. Most had the National Anthem on the soundtrack but mute ones were available, which would be played in conjunction with a record on the non-sync



George V

The most prolific supplier of National Anthem trailers was National Screen Service Ltd [NSS]. Opened in 1926 as the UK arm of an American company, NSS soon cornered the market in the production of film trailers, announcements and miscellaneous short films. Long and short versions of the National Anthem were available in black and white or Technicolor, in Academy ratio, Widescreen and, later, CinemaScope, to which could be added 'playouts', lengths of pictureless film with a musical soundtrack, lasting a couple of minutes, which obviated the need to run the non-sync while patrons left the theatre. Sales of National Anthem trailers must have been good in 1936, the year of three monarchs!

When George VI died in February 1952, NSS rushed out a black and white National Anthem trailer for Elizabeth II. This was known as the 'Emergency Queen'. They also produced what is referred to as the 'Condolence Trailer', paying tribute to the late King and welcoming the new Queen. The story goes that NSS sent out, unsolicited, copies of the 'Condolence Trailer' to all their clients in the knowledge that, given the tragic circumstances of the King's death, no cinema proprietor would refuse to pay for it!

The audience would stand and sometimes sing along to the Anthem, particularly during the Second World War. After the War people in general and the younger generation in particular, became less deferential and overtly patriotic and by the 1950s many patrons would make a mad dash for the exits as soon as the feature film finished to avoid having to stand whilst the Anthem played out. Such a scene occurs in the 1957 comedy *The Smallest Show on Earth*. By the 1960s the post war generation, of which I was one, considered playing the National Anthem old hat, a relic of their parents' era and it is my personal experience that it was largely abandoned in that decade, although I believe some cinemas continued the practice.

Frame enlargements are from the author's 35mm collection.



Edward VIII

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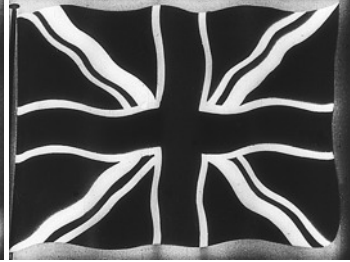
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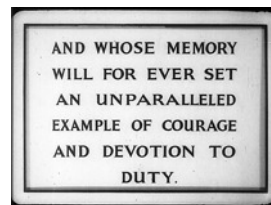
National Screen Service advertisements in the *Kiné Year Book* – 1948, 1953 & 1956



Emergency Queen



George VI



Condolence Trailer



Elizabeth II

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ADELA

By Mike Whitcombe

The Victoria Hall in Portsmouth was the talk of this famous naval port when it opened in 1885. Imposingly stern in a neoclassical style, it was a squat looking building that resembled a fancy mausoleum built for a decadent aristocrat. Built originally to accommodate 2,400 patrons, both seated and standing in balcony and stalls, it began showing films full-time in 1908, by which time the capacity was a thousand less and everyone was seated.

The Victoria closed in 1960 and was demolished soon after. It's rarely recalled nowadays but recently, on a warm, sunny May morning over a cup of coffee and a hot scone, it was fondly recalled by a shrewd, dapper, observant woman with a quick, dry sense of humour, who was born ninety-eight years ago. Her name is Adela Stiles and her earliest cinema-going memories date from a time when Charlie Chaplin, Rudolph Valentino and Clara Bow ruled the silver screen and the Victoria cinema boasted queues around the block.

"I can't remember the first film I saw at the cinema," says Adela, "but I was very young, probably no more than six or seven years old. It was all such a long, long time ago. But I do remember how exciting it was and I remember going to the Victoria. It seemed to be situated on an island with roads surrounding it, close to Hampshire Terrace where the local solicitors had their offices. It was quite cheap to get into – threepence, I think – and for that we always got two films, a 'coming next week' trailer and a Movietone newsreel. The second feature, what we used to call the B movie, always seemed to be a cowboy flick. I'm sure it wasn't but that's what I remember now.

My first love were musicals and I always wanted to see the latest one. I remember in the early 1930s watching *Footlight Parade* and seeing Dick Powell singing *By a Waterfall I'm Calling You* surrounded by girls swimming in the water while holding hands in a circle – or trying to! My mother also liked musicals although she was a great one for Nelson Eddy and Jeanette McDonald and would go and see them, often in the same film, over and over again.

Aunt Maude, my mother's sister, also liked going to the cinema and one day, when I was still very young, she took me to a tiny cinema surrounded by shops in an Arcade off Edinburgh Road called the **Arcade Picture Palace**. We sat in the front row but I can't remember what we saw or if I could even see the screen properly, we were sat so close. A little later my aunt took me to the **Theatre Royal**, which was then a cinema, to see *Flying Down to Rio* starring Fred Astaire. I loved that one – it was all music and dancing and it really appealed to me.

As I got older more and more cinemas opened, meaning there was a greater choice of films and I used to go a lot. I remember going to the **Apollo** often, which was just along from the **King's Theatre** and was renamed **Essoldo** much later. I also remember going with mum and dad to the opening night of the **Troxy** in Fratton Road in the summer of 1936. That was a big cinema and was set back from the road. I don't remember the name of the film on that first night but I do recall it starred Gracie Fields and we all enjoyed it. By that time I liked romantic films as well. If it had a handsome actor in it, I would queue up to see it. Robert Taylor was my favourite back then."

Adela began playing the piano from an early age and by the age of seventeen she had passed all her degrees and had even worked for a summer season in an orchestra at Lytham St Anne's. A few months after war broke out, she joined the Woman's Auxiliary Air Force, training as a teleprinter operator at Leighton Buzzard, where she met her husband, Barry, who was a pilot officer at the time. They married on 6 June 1942.

"We went to London for our honeymoon where we stayed at the Strand Palace Hotel, room 365, right opposite the Savoy Hotel," recalls Adela effortlessly, as if it were yesterday. "One afternoon we were in Leicester Square and my husband wanted to see *Blues in the Night* a movie that featured a jazz band – he loved jazz. We got to the box office of one of the many cinemas but I refused to go in. I had memories of the Prince's cinema in Lake Road being bombed two years before and I didn't fancy sitting in a cinema when the air raid sirens sounded and the bombs started dropping. But we did go dancing. The Royal Opera House in Convent Garden was a Mecca Dance Hall during the war and we had some wonderful times there."



Adela on her wedding day in June 1942

Adela's cinema-going was curtailed after the war when she joined her husband in Germany when he was posted to the British Occupation Zone. They returned to Britain in March 1949 but six months later they were on their way to Singapore. This was the beginning of the Malayan Emergency and Adela's husband, now a Squadron Leader, was posted to RAF Seletar, from which Beaufighters, Spitfires and Mosquitoes operated.

"Families of service personnel had to go to Singapore by boat," recalls Adela. "It took thirty days and I had two small children with me at the time. But we loved Singapore. We lived in a wonderful, spacious bungalow, enjoyed afternoon tea at the Raffles Hotel, parties in the evenings and the Cathay Cinema. We always went to the Cathay because it had air conditioning!"

On their return to England in 1951 they bought a house in Adela's home town of Portsmouth. It was just a ten-minute stroll from the North End district of the City, where there were several cinemas within walking distance. "Back in England," says Adela, who still lives in the house she and her husband bought seventy years ago, "our local cinemas were the **Odeon** and **Regent**, which were practically opposite each other. We were regulars and two of my favourite films were *West Side Story* and *The Sound of Music*. *A Night to Remember*, about the sinking of the Titanic, sticks in my mind as well. So does watching *Dr No*, the first James Bond movie, at the **Regent**."

Another favourite was *Lawrence of Arabia*, David Lean's Oscar-winning masterpiece starring Peter O'Toole. "We saw that at the **Odeon**," adds Adela. "That film meant a lot to my husband as he had met TE Lawrence soon after joining the RAF in the early 'thirties and had always admired and respected him, considering Lawrence to be a great man.

"By now we had three children – Barry, Diana and Neville – and I would often take them to the Rex in Fratton Road. It was only a little cinema, not as grand as the **Odeon** or **Regent** but they showed some good films, including *High Society* another wonderful musical." She pauses at this point and smiles. "I loved going to the cinema," she says with a twinkle in her eyes that reflect ninety years of happy cinema-going memories.

All the cinemas that Adela can recall have closed and many have been demolished. But the clarity of Adela's recollections brings these wonderful picture palaces back to life. Memories can play tricks on us but Adela's memories do not. By recalling tales of going to the flicks, particularly during the interwar years, a period universally regarded as the golden age of cinema-going, Adela makes us appreciate just how important a role cinemas have played – and continue to play – in our lives.



The Cinemas Mentioned by Adela

VICTORIA PORTSMOUTH

Designed in 1885 by prominent local architect Arthur Edward Cogswell (1858-1934), who would later design three other cinemas in the Portsmouth area (the *New Classic Cinema*, the *Palace* and the *Gaiety*) the *Victoria Hall* presented a show called 'Cinematoscope', described as animated photographs, in July 1896. A month later, 'Paul's Original and Only Theatrograph', direct from the *Alhambra Theatre* in London, was advertised. Occasional cinema shows were then presented from 1900 until August 1908, when the *Victoria Hall* became a full-time cinema. In August 1928 it was acquired by the Union circuit with talkies arriving in July 1929. It became an *ABC* cinema in October 1937, was plainly renamed *Victoria* in 1939 and closed on 7 March 1960 with the last film being *Expresso Bongo*.

ARCADE PICTURE PALACE PORTSMOUTH

This cinema was literally located in a shopping arcade that included a bookshop, Mr Trevin's Tobacconist and a sweet shop. It opened in 1910 before alterations and rebuilding in 1913 created a capacity of 500. It converted to sound in the early 1930s and was still operating when it was destroyed by Nazi bombs during an infamous Luftwaffe raid on the night of 10 January 1941 that left large areas of the naval City in ruins.

THEATRE ROYAL PORTSMOUTH



Built in 1854 as the *Landport Hall* and converted into a theatre two years later, the *Theatre Royal* we recognise today is due to an 1884 rebuild by Charles J Phipps and a 1900 rebuild by Frank Matcham. Lean years at the end of the 1920s saw a projection box added and from 7 March 1932 the theatre became a full-time cinema. The first film was *Common Law* starring Constance Bennett. It continued as a cinema until 1948 when it reverted to being a theatre. Today it's Grade II* Listed and has a capacity of 667. *photo taken May 2006*

APOLLO/ESSOLDI PORTSMOUTH

Located on Albert Road close to Frank Matcham's Grade II* Listed *Kings Theatre*, the *Apollo Electric Theatre* opened in April 1912 with 500 seats. Four years later it was enlarged to accommodate 1,250 seats with RCA Sound being installed in 1929. In 1936 a former chapel next door was incorporated into the site and the cinema was enlarged again to the plans of Robert A Thomas with the old chapel site becoming the new Art Deco entrance. *ABC* took it over in December 1937 but they relinquished it to *Essoldo* in December 1949. Rebranded *Essoldo* a year later it became a *Classic* briefly when the *Classic Cinema* chain acquired it in April 1972. It closed on 29 November 1975 and was demolished nine years later, when it was replaced by apartments and ground floor retail

TROXY PORTSMOUTH

As Adela recalls, this cinema opened with a Gracie Fields flick called *Queen of Hearts* in July 1936. It was designed by Robert Cromie for *Tivoli (Portsmouth) Ltd* and seated 1,926 in circle and stalls. It was taken over by *Essoldo* in November 1950 and in February 1954 it became the first cinema in the City to be equipped with *CinemaScope* and stereophonic sound. After closing in June 1963 it became an *Essoldo Bingo Club*. When *Bingo* ceased in 1993 it was converted to

retail. For the past two years the building has lain empty and, in the spring of 2021, hoardings were put up across the entrance lot – the cinema is sat back from the road – ready for demolition and the construction of apartments.

PRINCE'S CINEMA PORTSMOUTH

The fate of this cinema stopped Adela seeing a film on her honeymoon. Originally opened in 1868 as a circus it was converted into the *Royal Albert Theatre* the following year and renamed the *Prince's Theatre* three years later. After burning down in 1882 it was rebuilt and enlarged in 1891 by Frank Matcham, who returned in 1907 to install a cantilever circle after removing the supporting pillars of the old balcony. It began showing films full-time in 1924 and by the time sound was installed in August 1930 it had undergone several further renovations to accommodate 1,462 patrons in circle and stalls. Tragically, during a matinée performance of *Bulldog Drummond* on 24 August 1940, the cinema was hit by German bombs. Eight children were killed and the cinema, badly damaged, never reopened and was demolished a few years later.

CATHY CINEMA SINGAPORE

The *Cathay Cinema* in Singapore was part of the *Cathay Building*, headquarters of the *British Malayan Broadcasting Corporation*, designed by British architect Frank W Brewer. The ground floor consisted of the 1,300-seat capacity *Cathay Cinema*, a restaurant and a dance hall. There was also a roof garden above the cinema. Behind this there was an eleven-storey block complete with penthouse. The cinema opened on 3 October 1939 and, as Adela recalled, it was famous for its air conditioning, then a technological marvel, which was upgraded in 1948. Three years after the cinema closed in 2000, the front façade was made a national monument, after which the rest of the building was demolished as part of an ambitious redevelopment. Today the original art-deco facade of the cinema is incorporated into a modern-day design by Paul Tange of *Tange Associates* and comprises retail, food and beverage outlets and the eight screen *Cathay Cineplex* that includes 'The Picturehouse'.

ODEON PORTSMOUTH

The *Odeon* in the North End district of Portsmouth opened on 14 December 1936. It was designed by Andrew Mather (it was the largest and most expensive *Mather Odeon* that opened that year) and had a capacity of 1,824 in circle and stalls. In 1960 it had 70mm installed and in April 1974 it was tripled. A fourth screen was added in 1990. It closed on 10 January 2008. The auditorium is currently deserted and in a sorry state of repair but the long entrance foyer currently houses a Polish convenience store.

REGENT/GAUMONT PORTSMOUTH

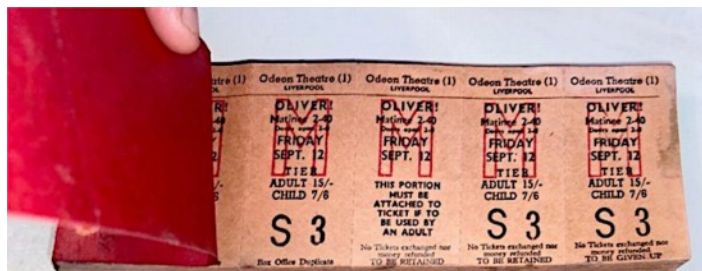
The *Regent* opened on 31 March 1923 with a silent version of *Oliver Twist* starring Jackie Coogan. There was seating for 2,000 in stalls and circle and the architect was the London-based S Clough, who designed an auditorium that was described as *Atmospheric*, *Greek Revival* and *Mediterranean Revival*. It was built and operated by *Independent Palace Picture Houses (Portsmouth Ltd)*, which sold it in October 1929 to the *Hyams & Gale* circuit. They in turn sold it to *Gaumont British Theatres* in February 1931, although it wasn't until March 1953, when it was owned by *Rank*, that it was officially renamed *Gaumont* (most people, though, still kept on calling it the *Regent*). In the early 1970s, *Rank*, which also owned the *Odeon* (see above) which stood almost opposite, decided they didn't need two single-screen cinemas with a combined capacity of almost 4,000 barely thirty yards from each other. The *Gaumont* drew the short straw and closed on 1 September 1973. Seven months later this beautiful cinema was demolished and a *Safeway* superstore was erected in its place. Today a *Lidl* store stands on the site.

REX PORTSMOUTH

The *Rex* opened on 19 December 1913 as the *Globe Kinema*. In April 1937 it was taken over by the owners of the nearby *Tivoli* cinema. After an extensive refurbishment that gave it a capacity of 500 (410 in the stalls and 90 in the circle) it reopened as the *Rex Cinema* on 24 May 1937 with the Errol Flynn swashbuckler *Captain Blood*. In April 1972 it became the *Curzon Bingo Club* but this was short-lived and in October 1972 it reopened as the *Classic International Film Theatre*. It finally closed on 16 May 1983 with *La Notte di San Lorenzo*. It was then converted to a snooker hall until 2001 when it was demolished. Flats now occupy the site.

MISCELLANY

JUST THE TICKET



A former worker at the Odeon (ex Paramount) Liverpool has unearthed unused tickets dating back to 1969. One was a book of 131 tickets for the 7 September showing of *West Side Story* while two others, from 12 September and 18 October were for *Oliver!* The cinema opened in 1934 and was subdivided several times before closing in 2008 with ten screens. It was demolished in 2010/11 and in 2017 a block of student accommodation with 488 rooms named The Paramount was built on the site. {6520}

Liverpool Echo – 16 May

A BIT OF INFORMATION

Tulley's Farm, a drive-in cinema in Crawley, West Sussex, became the first attraction in the UK to accept Bitcoin as payment. By mid-April it had already made over 100 transactions.

Daily Telegraph – 20 April; sent in by Ray Dolling

FLOATING CINEMA RETURNS

The floating cinema has returned to the Regent's Canal in London. Deck chairs and 16 boats provide seating for 228 people. Attendees can take their boats for a spin around Little Venice before showtime, when they don headphones for the main feature.

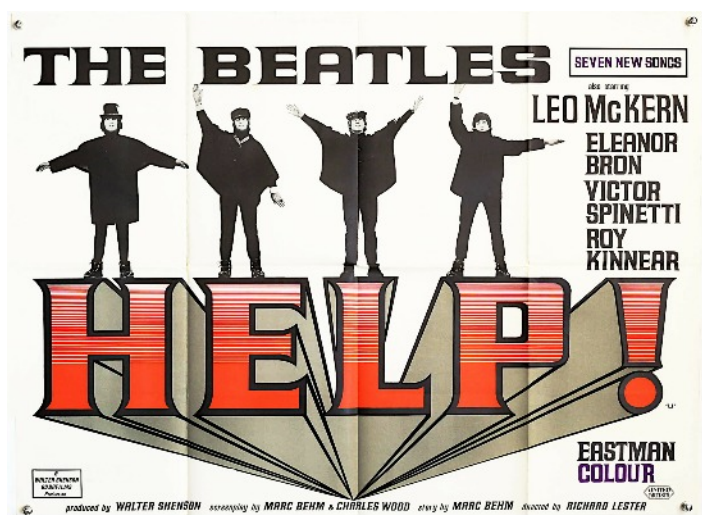
The i – 1 June; sent in by John R Forster

DIANA DORS IN FIRING LINE

Dian Dors was one of the first stars to be targeted in a Government purge on the negative portrayal of British life in post-war films. Documents from the National Archive reveal the then Home Secretary was furious over scenes of bullying and rioting at an approved school in the 1948 film *Good Time Girl*. The film was banned by some local Councils but the publicity just created more of a buzz at the box office.

Sunday Express – 30 May; sent in by Barry Quinton

HELPI HERE COMES THE SUM!



A collection of film posters and memorabilia belonging to Michael Armstrong, who died last year aged 73, was auctioned on 7 May. Expected to raise £50,000, most of the 345 items exceeded their estimate by a considerable amount. It included very rare posters for all three of The Beatles' films – *Help!*, *A Hard Day's Night* and *Yellow Submarine*. Michael was involved with the Regal at Wymondham [Norfolk] before he passed away. The auction results can be seen on the auctioneers' website at tinyurl.com/vvmvxdm and some background information at tinyurl.com/5duwccxy.

Metro – 26 April; sent in by Tom Laughlan, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

STAR BIDDING WARS

Darth Vader actor David Prowse's estate was expected to fetch more than £80,000 at auction. A prototype light sabre sold for £9,000 – 100 times the estimate. The auction was held on 4 May [may the fourth be with you]!

Metro – 20 April, 5 May; sent in by R David Simpson

CO-FOUNDER OF IMAX DIES

Graeme Ferguson, the Canadian filmmaker who co-founded IMAX in 1967 has died, aged 91. The initial inspiration for IMAX was *Polar Life*, an experimental film that he directed for Expo '67 in Montreal. He went on to develop a proprietary system of high-resolution cameras, film formats, projectors and theatres

British Cinematographer – 12 May; sent in by Terry Hanstock

SCIENCE AND THE CINEMA

A research project has compared a viewer's reactions when watching *Godzilla vs Kong* on a cinema screen and a 40-inch TV. The subject wore eye-tracking goggles so they could map what he was looking at and an ECG monitor so they could measure his heart rate. They found that when watching on the big screen, the subject's heart rate was more variable and his gaze fixation more stable than when looking at a TV. He looked away from the TV screen four times but did not look away from the cinema screen at all – even when reaching to eat popcorn. The results? "From a data set of one, we found that people find watching a film in a cinema more engaging than on a TV!"

Metro – 2 June; sent in by Martin Tapsell

PRIVATE SCREENING

An emergency ward nurse from Sweden has been selected to spend a week on an isolated island to watch the entire movie programme of the Göteborg Film Festival. The venue is a former lighthouse turned boutique hotel. The nurse said it would give her "time to reflect" after a busy year dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Daily Echo, Southampton – 2 February; sent in by Ian Patterson

ULVERSTON HOME FOR SALE

The house in Ulverston where Stan Laurel was born on 16 June 1890 is up for sale. The small terrace house in Argyle Street is owned by Mabel Radcliffe, 102. Her family hope it will be snapped up by a fan; the asking price was £160,000.

Daily Mirror – 9 April; sent in by Barry Quinton

?*%\$! VERY RUDE WORDS!

A third of us use 'strong' swear words more now than we did five years ago, a study for the British Board of Film Classification [BBFC] has revealed. It comes as a new guide shows the full extent of the foul language considered acceptable in films for children. Movies rated suitable for viewing with parental guidance [PG] may include words such as sh** and b*****ks, the BBFC said in its Parents' Guide to Language. Others are bloody, bugger, son of a bitch, bastard, p***, crap, a***, ass, sod and git. Meanwhile, swearing in films rated suitable for 12-year-olds may sometimes include f*** and, more frequently, words such as bitch and c**k, according to the guide. The BBFC said the words can be used in films and videos rated [12A] and [12] respectively "depending on context, frequency and tone".

Daily Mail – 10 June; sent in by Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton

UNDIES MOVIE FUN?

During lockdown, Scots were more likely than anyone else to watch a movie in their underwear, according to a new survey. Suggestions for suitable films included: *The Pelican Briefs*, *Ferris Bloomer's Day Off*, *Sink the Skidmark*, *All Quiet on the Western Y-Front*, *Free Willy* and *Strictly Ballroom*.

Daily Record – 29 April; sent in by Tom Laughlan

SIGNWRITER'S NIGHTMARE

Spare a thought for the unfortunate person who painted this poster for an open-air film show in the USA!



THE MAGNIFICENT MODEL MAKER

By Peter Lawley and Gary Stevens

Our friend Peter Lee has passed away aged 95. While many distinguished cinema historians publish their research, Peter produced magnificent scale models also based upon meticulous historical research. Peter's first model of the Regal Leamington Spa presented the 1931 cinema in its original state, complete with organ, festoon tabs and a Chinese-style art-deco interior.



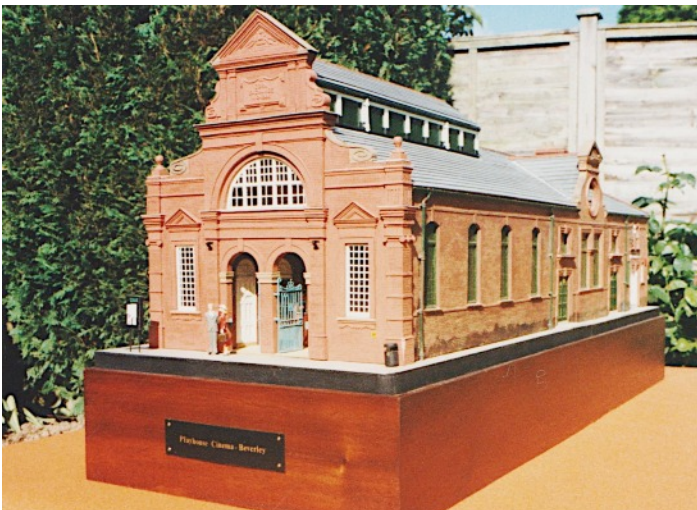
The Regal, later Apollo and now Vue

A second model showed it under the Apollo banner, where a striking modern glass-doored foyer replaced some of the original side buildings. Finally, he modelled a further change when the foyer and car park were replaced by three additional screens in 2004. Gary Stevens was General Manager at this time and worked closely with Peter. He arranged access to hidden corners of the building and to the roof so that detailed measurements could be taken.

Again, it was Gary Stevens, working with local member Peter Lawley who welcomed CTA members as the highlight of the July 2000 visit: 'Summer Waters by Leamington Spa'. Gary's characteristic flair for showmanship and free publicity came into its own when local newspaper headlines proclaimed 'Movie Palaces are Stars Again', publicising the visit both as a prestigious event for the cinema and an added bonus for Leamington.

A particular feature was a 'CTA Premiere' in which the Regal model went on display in the foyer so that members could appreciate the fruits of 1,360 hours of dedicated work. The 1/48th size scale model required a baseboard of 4 sq ft. Gary recalls Peter worrying more for the safety of the model when it went on display than he did for the space it occupied. Gary managed to convince him that he would guard it like the crown jewels.

Peter had a gift for making friends with cinema people – be they cinema staff, veterans or local community supporters. He built a model of the Regal Minehead, Somerset and presented it to the local enthusiasts who had rescued and restored the building as a live cinema and local community theatre.



The Picture Playhouse Beverley

For Beverley, East Yorkshire, he modelled the Picture Playhouse (which first opened in 1911 when it took over the 1885 former Corn Exchange). The model split in two to show the interior with its unique balcony arrangement. It now rests in the local museum as a reminder of what was there before the interior was destroyed in favour of a bland, semi-occupied retail space.

Peter was a Coventry lad and lived there during the 1940 blitz. For his home City, he interviewed former staff members when he reconstructed the vanished Coventry Forum cinema, which he had attended in its prime while courting his beloved future wife and fellow researcher Sally.

One of his greatest achievements was a model of Coventry Hippodrome Theatre (visited by the CTA in 1992). It features a detailed recreation of the exterior and interior of this, the last theatre to be built in the UK before the second world war. Here, again, he made friends with the singing idol, Vince Hill who had appeared there many times and who supported him with advice and encouragement. Peter himself had appeared on stage there as a youngster with the Air Cadets during WW2, with the great comedy duo of the time, Basil Radford and Nauntun Wayne. The two featured in Alfred Hitchcock's classic *The Lady Vanishes*, as well as playing a much larger part in its lesser-known sequel *Night Train to Munich* (a must-watch on YouTube).

Peter was sometimes disappointed with the lack of interest in his work from museums and others. It was part of the same all too familiar philistinism inherent in local Council planning, which regarded cinema architecture as vulgar and disposable, leading to the loss of significant architectural heritage. But almost at the end of his life, he was discovered by the newly-appointed director of the principal local museum. In 2019, Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum staged a special exhibition telling the story of 200 years of entertainment in the town. Its centrepiece, Peter's magnificent model of the Regal was viewed by thousands of appreciative visitors.

For Peter the models were not just a hobby but his life and, as he reached his twilight years, he became concerned as to where they might end up. Gary often used to calm his reservations by reassuring him that they would form a lasting legacy to show countless future generations what cinema and theatre buildings used to be like. Peter took comfort in these words of solace.

Through a little research and soul-searching Peter's beloved work can be seen now on various websites. Gary and Peter still treasure their VHS video copies of 'Miniature Marvels' where the different models of the Regal are featured. His creations drew attention from overseas TV companies. Production teams were sent from the USA to make TV programmes about his hobby.

We shall both miss his warm company and continue to admire the wonderful cinema legacy he left to us all.

Gary said: "His words of wisdom will never be forgotten and I doubt that I will ever come across anyone again who had such a calm and almost graceful care for me as a person and for all the people around him, not least of course his wife Sally."



Peter, with Sally, checks a detail on the roof of the Apollo (now Vue) Leamington Spa

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]

AYR



The Category B listed former Green's Playhouse sold at auction in June for £432,500, against a guide price of £375,000. It opened in July 1931 and with 3,104 seats was the third-largest cinema to be built in Scotland. Films ceased in the late 1960s in favour of bingo, which continues today; Mecca has a lease on the building until 2026 at a rent of £166,498 pa. The CTA visited in July 2009, when the above picture was taken. {23270}

Daily Record – 8 June

BARNSTAPLE (Devon)

Plans have been approved to extend the Green Lane Shopping Centre to create a new seven-screen cinema. The space occupied by the former BHS store will stay as retail but the upper two floors plus an additional new floor above will house the cinema. It will be a replacement for the current four-screen Central Cinema [ex Gaumont] run by Scott Cinemas, which is Grade II listed. {22744}

North Devon Journal – 20 May

BATH (North Somerset)

Plans, reported on p15 of Bulletin 54/3, to convert the former Scala at Oldfield Park into 92 student flats have been thrown out by the Council. {28722}

Somerset Live – 6 May

BEESTON (Notts)

The new eight-screen Arc cinema opened on 28 May with a total of 720 seats. Six of the screens have digital laser projection and Dolby Digital 7.1 Surround Sound, and there are two premium 'Hypersense' auditoria, with 4K laser projection, Dolby Atmos Surround Sound and giant wall-to-wall screens. Each is fitted out with luxurious reclining leather seats with generous legroom. {65227}

LeftLion – 2 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock



The former Windsor in Bearwood, Birmingham

BIRMINGHAM (Bearwood)

The former Windsor was due to go to auction on 19 May with a guide price of £475,000 but was sold prior to auction for an undisclosed amount. It opened in September 1930 with 1,750 seats in stalls and circle. There was a stage with eight dressing rooms and a Compton organ. It closed in February 1960 and later became an ice rink, a nightclub, a snooker club and a bar. {41358}

Express & Star – 5 May; photo [bottom previous column] taken June 2008

BIRMINGHAM (Central)

It has been announced that the Electric in Station Street will not reopen. It is thought that its 88-year lease was due to expire. It opened in December 1909 and a second screen was added in the 1970s. It had several changes of owner and programming policy before it closed in 2003. It was restored and reopened in 2004 until closed by the pandemic. {9559}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo [on front cover] taken September 2005

BISHOP AUCKLAND (Durham)

We reported on p24 of the last Bulletin about plans for a cinema at Tindale. It has now been confirmed that the operator will be Reel, although the new report states six screens whereas the previous one gave seven. It is due to open in October 2022.

Northern Echo – 5 May

BLACKBURN (Lancs)

The new eight-screen Reel opened on 17 May with a total of 695 seats. Two of the auditoria with 90 seats and 66 seats are named Reel Lounges which offer plush sofas and armchairs and a drinks & food service. There are six Premier Lounge (regular) screens with seating for: 72, 113, 97, 113, 72 & 72. There is a car park below the cinema which has free parking for up to 4 hours for cinema patrons. {65130}

Lancashire Telegraph – 11 May

BRIDPORT (Dorset)

Permission has been granted for renovations and changes to the Grade II listed Electric Palace. The work includes the restoration of the large roof lights, which have been reduced in size over the years. {22418}

Lyme Regis & Bridport News – 11 June

BRIGHTON

The Grade II listed Duke of York's was plunged into uncertainty when its parent company Cineworld faced financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic. But after being closed for seven months, the venue welcomed back customers from 17 May. The General Manager said, "We are here to stay". {2433}

The Argus – 25 May; sent in by Barry Quinton

The Grade II* listed Hippodrome held an open day on 21 May. Groups of up to five were allowed inside for 15-minute sessions. Redevelopment plans were on view, which include replacing the roof, which has been damaged by dry rot. If approved, the restoration into a live performance venue will take 18 months. {36884}

The Argus – 21 May; sent in by Barry Quinton

The Projected Picture Trust

Dean Clough Mills, HALIFAX, HX3 5AX

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

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

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

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

contact@theppt.org

www.theppt.org

BRISTOL



The former Broadway at Filwood Park is to be demolished. It opened in 1938 with 1,163 seats but films ceased in 1971 in favour of bingo. The building has been empty and boarded-up for about the last 30 years. {47281}

BBC News website – 19 June; photo taken March 2006

CHIPPENHAM (Wilts)



There are plans in place to build flats on the site of the former Palace Cinema in Station Hill. The frontage would be retained with the auditorium area demolished to build the flats. The **Palace** opened in 1910 by the Chippenham Public Hall and Skating Rink Co Ltd – this was roller skating, which seems to have been all the craze at the time. The cinema section was subsequently leased to Albany Ward and he modernised it to provide “a theatre of adequate size and appointments to suit modern requirements” as recorded in the directors’ report of April 1915. It was taken over by Provincial Cinematograph Theatres [PCT] in 1920 with Albany Ward staying with PCT and his subsidiary company known as Albany Ward Theatres. PCT was purchased by Gaumont in 1928 and as such the **Palace** closed in November 1936 when the new Gaumont opened in Timber Street.

Over the years it was used for many things: a warehouse, workshop and in later years part of the Westinghouse engineering works. It reopened as a nightclub ‘Buds’ in 2015 and then the ‘Karmas’ club but this closed in 2019 and the building has been up for sale since then. Interesting to see what happens here – the former skating rink is a Dorothy House distribution centre – parking has always been an issue here. The local Civic Society would like to see it saved as a public amenity of some description! {48863}

Sent in by David Reeves; photo taken June 2013

DARLASTON (Walsall)

It has been confirmed that the twelve-screen **Showcase** will not reopen and will be converted into a car supermarket. The cinema opened in August 1989 and had 2,870 seats. {17102}

Birmingham Live – 7 May; sent in by Philip Crompton & Ken Roe; photo [top next column] taken April 2007

DERBY

We reported on p21 of Bulletin 55/2 that the **Showcase** at Foresters Park would not reopen. Now plans have been submitted to demolish it and build a car dealership. {21129}

The Business Desk – 10 June



The Showcase Darlaston

DONCASTER

The new six-screen Savoy opened on 17 May. One of the screens has laser projection and Dolby Atmos sound. All screens are equipped with electric recliner and rocker seats. There is a 44-second video of a glimpse inside the cinema at youtu.be/c4HfvnRDA0A savoydoncaster.uk {65131}

Doncaster Council Press Release – 19 May

DURHAM



The former Majestic has been sold after the current owners concluded that the bingo operation was not viable. An application has been submitted to demolish it and build 138 student apartments. The cinema opened in August 1938 with 906 seats in a stadium plan. It was damaged by fire in 1956 but reopened within a few months. Films ceased in December 1961 in favour of bingo. {47268}

Northern Echo – 11 May

FLINT



After an absence of over 50 years a new **PLAZA** sign has appeared high on the front wall of the Gaumont Plaza plus new signage over the canopy, suggesting it is doing well since reopening as an independent cinema five years ago. Unfortunately the history page on their website is blank but you can find a brief history with a few photographs at cinematreasures.org/theaters/22948 and there are plenty more photographs to be found by Googling ‘Plaza Cinema Flint’. In actual fact I first saw this last September but it is only now that I was able to stop by on my way to Wales and take a photograph. {22948}

Sent in & photo by Alan Hodson

GLASGOW (Riverside)

Cineworld has announced that it will be surrendering the lease on the IMAX cinema in the Glasgow Science Centre. Workers at the cinema have complained that many of them only found out about this on social media after it was announced on Twitter. The IMAX boasts the biggest cinema screen in Scotland and was the first of its kind in the country. It sits in a large, modern, titanium structure as part of the Glasgow Science Centre and was opened in 1999. The rest of the Science Centre will remain open. {27084}

The Scotsman – 13 May

GRAVESEND (Kent)

Plans have been submitted to build a nine-storey building containing 47 flats on the site of the former Majestic/EMD. The auditorium was demolished following a fire in 2009. The façade remains and would be converted into six flats. See Casework p6. {37337}

Gravesend Messenger – 6 May

GRAYS (Essex)

Revised plans have been submitted by JD Wetherspoon for turning the former State into a pub. They do not appear to show many changes from the original application, which was granted planning permission but was not implemented. The plans were going out to public consultation immediately. The statement says, "With the exception of the original separate shop areas, there are no proposals to demolish any of the original structural elements or original fabric of the main building. New vertical windows are to be cut into the West elevation wall located behind the stage and additional smaller windows to the North elevation under the circle seating.

Original and existing internal and external features would be retained repaired and restored. The advice of Historic England will be followed in this regard, together with advice from the Cinema Theatre Association. Some of the original existing cinema seats will be fully restored and utilised in the new public house layout. Due to the number of seats in the auditorium, it would not be possible to re-use all of them. As such we are looking to relocate a number of the seats to another historic cinema where a refurbishment is being proposed. The original Compton cinema organ will be restored and brought back into use." The plans are on the thurrock.gov.uk website, ref 21/00729/LBC. {1837}

*Thurrock Gazette – 18, 20 May; Essex Live – 18 May;
Thurrock Nub News – 22 May; sent in by Margaret Burgoine*

GREAT YARMOUTH (Norfolk)

The Empire opened in July 1911 and operated as a full-time cinema until the late 1960s, when it switched to bingo. It had intermittent spells on film until the early 1990s. By 2006 it was a nightclub but that closed in 2008 and the building has been empty since. Now owner Peter Jay has plans to use it as a hub for street food, bars, artisan coffee and live music, hoping to ride a staycation surge. {17911}

*Great Yarmouth Mercury – 4 May; Norwich Evening News – 6 May;
sent in by Les Woods; photo [on front cover] taken July 2007*

KESWICK (Cumbria)



The Alhambra is having a £750,000 facelift. The façade is being restored and new windows fitted. A 30-seat second screen is being installed under the balcony by removing four rows of seats from the back of the auditorium. The reopening is planned for September. The CTA visited in July 2010, when the above photo was taken. {3150}

News & Star with Cumberland News – 8 May; sent in by Terry Hanstock & Anthony Smith

LONDON (Deptford)

Backyard Cinema, which already runs a venue in Wandsworth, is to submit a planning application to turn a disused warehouse into a three-screen cinema. Should permission be granted, renovation works could begin in autumn 2021 with a view to opening in March 2022.

News Shopper – 7 May; sent in by Philip Stevens

LONDON (Kensal Rise)

The Lexi reopened on 17 May, fully refurbished with a new second screen in an additional building, adding 30 more seats to its existing 75. However, social distancing means they cannot use the full capacity yet. See p22 Bulletin 54/6. {25925}

Brent & Kilburn Times – 11 May

LONDON (Kensington)

Work is beginning on a total of seven new buildings at Olympia – including two hotels, plus a 4,400-capacity live music venue that will be run by AEG Presents. Olympia Central Hall will be demolished while the iconic structures of Olympia National and Olympia Grand, both Grade II listed, are being incorporated into the site's overall redevelopment. The 14-acre Olympia redevelopment project will create a new cultural hub in West London with a four-screen arthouse cinema, restaurants, shops, cafés and 550,000 sq. ft of office and co-working space. Trafalgar Entertainment will be the tenant for the site's new 1,575-seat theatre.

*Construction Enquirer – May; The Stage – 20 May; Time Out – 8 June;
sent in by R David Simpson & Tom Laughlan*

LONDON (West End)

Further to the item on p26 of the last Bulletin about the Grade II listed former Saville Theatre, now the Odeon Covent Garden, further information has come to light about the refusal of planning permission to turn it into a hotel. Planners ruled that a colony of ten different bee species in the adjacent Phoenix Garden would be starved of sunlight by a proposed roof terrace. The garden is described as "an oasis of calm in the West End". See Letters p30.

Sunday Express – 6 June; sent in by Barry Quinton

LUTON (Beds)



Campaign group Save Our Town has launched a survey about the former Savoy/ABC amid rumours of an upcoming planning application. They are asking the public's views on what they would like to see the building's future use. It opened in October 1938 and finally closed in November 2000; it has been empty since. {6248}

Luton News – 2 June; sent in by Margaret Burgoine; photo taken April 2004

MANCHESTER (Belle Vue)

The fourteen-screen Showcase was demolished in May; a school will be built on the site. It was confirmed last year that it would not reopen and it suffered a fire in February – see p 26 last Bulletin and p22 Bulletin 54/6. {25061}

Sent in by Ken Roe

MARGATE (Kent)

We reported on p27 of the last Bulletin that the Council had sold the Dreamland estate to operator Sands Leisure. Now it transpires that that company is to be sold. Its listed assets include the Dreamland cinema and the prospectus states, "Subject to match funding, there is an opportunity to access c£4 million in grant funding for restoring and converting the building."

*Kent Online – 18 June; Isle of Thanet News – 20 June;
sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Philip Stevens*

MILFORD HAVEN (Pembroke)



The former Astoria went to auction on 18 May but sold after the auction for an undisclosed amount. It opened in August 1932 and closed as a cinema about 1970. It became bingo, which closed in March 2013. It was last used as a bar and restaurant. {51150}

Western Telegraph – 18 May; sent in by Darron Keeling; photo taken April 2010

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

The Tyneside Cinema has said its opening will be delayed after the building suffered widespread damage from a flood in January. A spokesman said it is likely to remain closed until July.

Newcastle Chronicle – 11 May

NEWTON ABBOT (Devon)

Plans, reported on p27 of the last Bulletin, for a £9m redevelopment of the town centre have been approved by the government. A new cinema will be built and the existing Alexandra Theatre repurposed.

In Your Area – 19 May

NORTHWICH (Cheshire)



A dedicated team of enthusiasts has been working behind the scenes to revive the Grade II listed former Plaza. It opened in December 1929 with 1,263 seats in stalls and circle. Films ceased in the early 1960s and bingo took over, which closed in March 2011; the building has been vacant since. It is hoped to turn it into an arts and music venue; some events have already been held. The balcony seats are still in situ and once restored, the capacity will increase from 500 to 1,000. The CTA visited in 1999. {22410}

Northwich Guardian – 12 May; photo taken August 2007

NOTTINGHAM (Mapperley)

The Haunted Museum in the Grade II listed former Majestic is set to close because of damage caused to the building over the winter. The owners say the building is beyond repair and hope to find a new home for the Museum. The cinema opened in June 1929 with 721 seats in stalls and circle, designed by AJ Thraves. It closed in September 1957 and was subsequently used for retail. {45066}

Sent in by Terry Hanstock

OAKHAM (Rutland)

Plans have been unveiled for a two-screen cinema in the Victoria Hall. Subject to approval, it is hoped to open the Rutland Kino next summer, with 89 and 30 seats. The building's conversion is being overseen by architect Stefanie Fischer.

Rutland & Stamford Mercury – 3 June

PORTSMOUTH

Work is well under way to convert the former Shaftesbury into flats. The façade is to be retained and the auditorium split into two with the middle being a courtyard. The rear entrance has been opened up for builders' access. The venue was opened in 1890 and by 1910 it was operating as a cinema. It closed in 1959 in favour of bingo. The operator was Peter Arnett Leisure, trading as Crown Bingo, which also operated the former Criterion in Gosport – it looks as if that may go the same way, for residential use. {46972}

Sent in by RW Hawkins

PRESCOT (Knowsley)

Heritage campaigners are sifting through applications to find an operator to reopen the former Palace. The current capacity is 160 but there is scope to extend and add additional screens. Original features of the cinema include a the façade and barrel-ceilinged auditorium, which have survived intact, as well as 120 of the original cinema seats. Under the funded restoration scheme, the balcony that was partly demolished in the 1980s could be reinstated. {51658}

Liverpool Echo – 15 May

PWLLHELI (Gwynedd)

£900,000 of upgrading work is in progress at the 354-seat Neuadd Dwyfor. The work by its Council owners will see redesigning the foyer, creating an accessible toilet and improving the auditorium and balcony seating. The venue is expected to reopen in the autumn. {26642}

North Wales Chronicle – 1 June

READING

The former Argos store is being converted into a four-screen cinema called the Reading Biscuit Factory. The licence application was submitted in April and the venue was expected to open in June.

Reading Chronicle – 22 April; sent in by Mark Staunton

REDCAR (Cleveland)

Work has started on the new £9.6m three-screen Regent. It will be on the same site and replace the former cinema of the same name, which closed due to structural defects. The work is due to be completed in March 2022 and the cinema is expected to open soon afterwards. An independent operator is being sought.

Evening Gazette (Teesside) – 24 May

ROMNEY MARSH (Kent)

The most cinema bereft part of Kent will have to wait until maybe the autumn to open the new Cinemarsh, installed in the Marsh Academy Leisure centre with funding from multiple sources. However, social distancing must be eased or dropped to make opening possible with just 46 seats. There is a foyer, toilets and a 5-metre-wide screen but the space has been used by voters, not filmgoers!

Kent Online – 4 June; sent in by Philip Stevens and Martin Tapsell

ROTHERHAM (South Yorks)



Mecca Bingo has confirmed that its operation in the former Regal/Odeon/Scala will not reopen. It is thought the lease was due to expire this year. The property sold at auction in 2019 for £575,000. It originally opened in December 1934 with 1,825 seats in stalls and circle. It became an Odeon in 1946 and was sold to an independent operator in 1975 and renamed Scala, by 1981 using the circle only; it closed in September 1983. Plans have been submitted to demolish the venue and erect a residential building with 45 homes. {18509}

Rotherham Business – 7 May, 1 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken February 2005

SITTINGBOURNE (Kent)

The 11th cinema in the Light chain was opened by the Mayor of Swale on 28 May. It has eight screens ranging from 35 to 186 seats. Seating is either standard, full length loungers or electric recliners. There is also a nine-lane bowling alley, a retro arcade, diner and two bars. {65240}

Kent Online – date unknown; sent in by Martin Tapsell

Elsewhere in the town, the New Century cinema reopened in mid-May. It has two screens, housed upstairs in the former 1937 Odeon. It has lost over £25,000 during the pandemic and the manager has relied on the kindness of friends and family to survive. *Peter Rabbit 2* was almost sold out but the later shows were quiet.

Kent Online – 17 May; sent in by Philip Stevens

SKELMERSDALE (Lancs)

We reported on p23 of Bulletin 55/2 of plans for a two-screen cinema in the Concourse Shopping Centre. It opened on 17 May and closed on 20 June, lasting barely four weeks. It was in the space previously occupied by the Oscar/Focus cinemas. Each 125-seat auditorium was “fitted with comfy, Italian leather high-back chairs, each with 1.5-metre spacing between rows, to create a luxury feel with additional legroom”. It was run by Asif Sahil and not by the American Ultra Star company, as previously reported. It subsequently transpired that films were being shown on DVD/Blu-ray, not professional industry standard digital projection, so the cinema did not appear to have the capability to screen new releases. {65200}

Sent in by Ken Roe

SPALDING (Lincs)



The former Savoy was damaged by fire on 14 May, three days before the Regent Bingo was due to reopen. An arson investigation was launched but the cause is thought to be an electrical fault. The owners have promised to repair the damage but it may take up to six months. The cinema opened in June 1937 with 1,500 seats in stalls and circle, designed by AJ Thraves. Films ceased in July 1970 and bingo took over. The CTA visited in March 2002, when the above picture was taken. {43392}

The Linconite – 19 May; sent in by Darron Keeling & Ken Roe

STOURBRIDGE (Dudley)

We reported on p29 of the last Bulletin that plans had been submitted to demolish the former Danilo. Firefighters tackled a blaze there on 3 May at 10pm, which is being treated as arson. I went to have a look at the cinema and the demolition people have already made a start. {37749}

Sent in by Ivan Harris

STOWMARKET (Suffolk)

The Regal reopened on 28 May after a £3.6m revamp. Two more screens have been added in a new extension, the foyer has been enlarged and a café added. {6241}

East Anglian Daily Times – 7 May; sent in by Terry Hanstock

SWANSEA

The Grade II listed former Castle has been put on the market but no asking price has been stated. It opened in December 1913 and closed in October 1991. It has been a LazerZone ever since. Planning permission for student housing was granted in September 2017. The estate agent's particulars can be downloaded at tinyurl.com/46hpse39. {17668}

Wales Online – 7 June; photo [top next column] taken August 2007



The former Castle Swansea

TOTTON (Hants)

The Savoy opened in 1936 and closed in 1961. It became a factory in 1977 but was later turned into a block of flats called Savoy House. In 2015 tenants were moved out following the discovery of structural faults and asbestos. Now consent is being sought to remove the former cinema's sloping roof and replace it with an extra storey containing six one-bedroom apartments. {50581}

Southern Daily Press – 14 May; sent in by Ian Patterson

TYWYN (Gwynedd)

Last year the Magic Lantern obtained funding from Film Hub and the National Lottery to research its history. Led by Chris Richards they have been collecting memories, stories and photographs covering the building's 128-year history. One of the more surprising facts to have been discovered so far, from a previous owner, is that in 1937 the cinema acquired a second-hand projector from Joachim von Ribbentrop, the then German ambassador, when the German Embassy in London was refurbished. {26657}

Cambrian News – 13 May; sent in by Jeremy Perkins

WAKEFIELD (West Yorks)

It has been confirmed by the Council that the former Regal/ABC/Cannon is to be demolished this summer. Architects have been appointed to design a new building, to include a new façade that will celebrate the cinema's Art Deco frontage. See p28 last Bulletin. {3787}

Pontefract & Castleford Express – 7 June; sent in by Darron Keeling

WELLS (Somerset)



The operator of the three-screen Film Centre has made enquiries about buying it from the Council owners in advance of his lease expiring in January 2024; he currently pays £13,000 a year in rent. The building was constructed in the late-1950s and previously served as a boys' club before being converted into a cinema in 1992. The screens seat 116, 113 & 82. {25821}

Frome Nub News – 17 June; photo taken June 2018

WOODBIDGE (Suffolk)

A local village has held a scarecrow competition to raise funds for the Riverside Centre. The theatre needs a replacement boiler after the current one broke during the winter, meaning the venue was unable to stay warm leading to internal damage and a damp problem. The designs for the scarecrows were movie-themed – *Singin' in the Rain*, *Marilyn Monroe*, *Wizard of Oz*, *Star Wars*, *Batman* and others. {22411}

East Anglian Daily Times – 30 April; Ipswich Star – 6 June; sent in by Terry Hanstock

LETTERS

CINEMA IN KETTERING

The article on the Kettering Gaumont in the May/June Bulletin did an excellent job of bringing the cinema to life through text and illustrations. The refurbishment in 1953 would seem to have been one of the first carried out by Rank post-war, resulting in one of its smallest cinemas. Although there was no photograph to show the original auditorium with its exposed roof trusses, it sounds as though the interior was not worth preserving.

Rank is blamed for the closure of the Gaumont six years later. I recall that around this time the company revealed there were two places in the country where cinema attendances had declined far more dramatically than anywhere else, without obvious explanation: Chichester and Kettering. Both towns had two good Rank cinemas but were over-seated for their population. When the Gaumont Kettering closed, Rank was disappointed that attendances at the Odeon did not improve.

During the 1950s Rank was required to keep the weekly releases on the Odeon and Gaumont circuits separate as a condition of being allowed to form Circuits Management Association to run them both. Otherwise, Rank might well have shifted the more popular Gaumont releases into the much larger Odeon and made the trading position of the Gaumont worse. There was an increasing shortage of attractive 'product' available to the Rank circuits, exacerbated by the feud between Rank and 20th Century-Fox, which kept the latter's CinemaScope output off its screens for several years.

In the eventual switch of the company's better cinemas to a new Rank circuit, the Gaumont was inevitably placed among the leftovers on the new National release, which was soon shunned by distributors. No doubt, it did poorer business as a result and was therefore closed. The loss of the two Rank cinemas directly helped Kettering's other cinemas – the Granada and Savoy – carry on for many years, as indicated in the article.

Allen Eyles

Some further information on Ezekiel Charles Shapeero (Galicia, Austria 1880 - 1930 Nottingham) and George Victor Hutton (Cobley Hill, Worcestershire 1862 - 1934 Leominster), co-owners of the Kettering Electra Pavilion. (May/June Bulletin, p8)

Prior to moving to Nottingham, Shapeero was a general dealer in Blackburn, where he became a naturalised UK citizen in 1903. By 1911 he was the managing director of Sharples & Co, a firm of opticians. He apparently took up film exhibition as a 'hobby', with an investment in Leno's Picturedrome in 1914. His hobby escalated and he built up a substantial portfolio of cinemas in Nottingham and the Midlands. He was also a delegate to the Cinema Exhibitors Association General Council and three of his sons, Aaron, Cyril and Isidore, eventually followed him into cinema management. In 1928 Denman (Midlands) Cinemas bought the Shapeero Circuit, as it then was, on behalf of the Gaumont British Corporation, for the sum of £250,000. This was a vast amount at the time and doubtless ensured that Shapeero was able to leave an estate valued at £111,000 on his death two years later.

Hutton started in business as a mantle and fur dealer but by 1921 was described as a picture house proprietor, obituaries calling him a pioneer of the Nottingham cinema industry. He and Shapeero were in partnership during the 1920s, the company being referred to at various times as Hutton & Shapeero Ltd and the Hutton-Shapeero Circuit. His son, John Victor Hutton, was also involved in the business for a time, although he later returned to the retail clothing trade.

Terry Hanstock

JAGS V JABS

Reading the editorial in the newest Bulletin reminds me to provide some clarification. It seems that jag is a Scottish term (and perhaps also Irish) for jab, as well as being the favoured transport of burly northern pugilist former politicians! Thought I'd mention it in case you get any offended Braveheart types writing to you from amongst the hordes(!) of Scottish members! Indeed, the usage of the word once vaccinations started actually prompted several newspaper editors to fill entire columns with the jags vs jabs debate up here – like there's nothing more important such as a global pandemic going on. Anyway, fine work on the Bulletin as ever, hope all is well – I'm still waiting on that second jag!

Gary Painter

RE: BEAU NASH ARTICLE PART 2

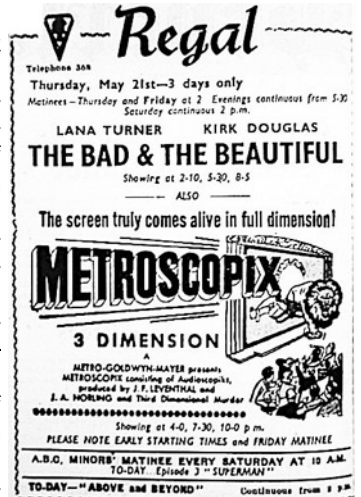
I have enjoyed reading Ben Doman's two-part article about the Beau Nash Picture House and was interested to see the newspaper advertisement for the screening of *Metroscopix* (on P17 of Bulletin 55/3). The advert says "Polaroid glasses are supplied free" when this in fact was a single-strip anaglyph 3D film requiring red/green glasses. I attach a larger advert for the same programme, screened at the ABC Regal in Beverley, East Yorkshire in 1953, which makes no mention of the glasses, so I assume this was added by the exhibitor in the Beau Nash advert. In fact, the 24-minute *Metroscopix* film was a compilation of three earlier anaglyph 3D novelty MGM short films; *Audioscopiks* (1935), *New Audioscopiks* (1938) and *Third Dimensional Murder* (1941). It was clearly put together quickly to cash in on the 3D craze of the early 1950s, allowing cinemas not able to show polarised 3D films (using two synchronised projectors for the left and right eye images) to join in and attract customers with something in 3D. The final *Third Dimensional Murder* sequence was available as a Super 8 home movie from Perry's Movies Ltd in the 1970s, advertised as *Murder in 3D*. I still have my copy and note that it cost me £29.95 for the pleasure!

Steve Oldfield

BALLYBUNION

When reading the article *Wanderings in Ireland* by Hugh Sykes in Bulletin 55/2, I was as they say 'Gobsmacked' to see the Savoy Ballybunion featured. I thought I was the only one who not only knew the cinema but indeed Ballybunion itself! I came across this wonderful place whilst touring the Ring of Kerry in May 1996 and seeing the name as we approached, I was quite amazed at the magic of it. Ballybunion? Surely not. Have they made the name up especially for me? Is Will Hay filming here? I was soon brought down to earth by the photographs in the hotel reception area showing the owner shaking hands with about every famous golfer in the world. It turned out that Ballybunion has what is reputed to be the best golf course in the world! I was soon wrapped up in the wonder of the place and fulfilled an ambition of having a pint of Guinness on the West Coast of Ireland in the Railway Bar, just yards away from a small building what I was to discover as the Savoy cinema. I have attached a photo from 1996 and you can see the cinema, which I think was closed even then, has now had a makeover. When I say makeover, I mean a different colour coat of paint! A wonderful memory and thanks to Hugh Sykes the magic has been re-born.

Terry Rourke



The Savoy in 1996



The Railway Bar, Ballybunion

GUILDFORD

Over the years information has appeared in the Bulletin concerning cinema in Guildford. However, there is one that appears to have eluded mention – the **Playhouse**. My wife is a Guildfordian and remembers its location in High Street near Tunsgate, not as a stand-alone cinema building but at the end of a small shopping arcade. The 'day boards' were positioned either side of the arcade's High Street entrance. The **Playhouse** closed years ago [12 June 1965] and remained so until it became part of the redevelopment of the whole of the Tunsgate area. Can anyone remember the exact date it was demolished or give any other information on the **Playhouse**?

RW Hawkins

Editor's Note: Closing date given above, photo and other information from cinematreasures.org/theaters/39303.

COLOUR FILM

I came across a film being shown on *Talking Pictures* TV stating it was filmed in the Dufaycolor process. The imagery remains as fresh today as it was in 1939. Can somebody explain?

RW Hawkins

Editor's Note: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dufaycolor has a full description of the process. It states that Dufaycolor was an early British additive colour photographic film process, introduced for motion picture use in 1932 and for still photography in 1935. It was derived from Louis Dufay's Diophtichrome plates, a glass-based product for colour still photography, introduced in France in 1909. Dufaycolor was used in only two British-made feature films: the two colour sequences in *Radio Parade* of 1935 (1934) and the all-colour *Sons of the Sea* (1939), directed by Maurice Elvey.

WINDMILL IN SOHO

The above often gets a mention in the Bulletin as it was used as a cinema and many films have featured its theme. Can somebody do an article with a potted history of its colourful past? I believe it became a TV studio for a short time. It seems to have been closed since 2018 so what has it been used for since then? Any suggestions for a book on its history?

RW Hawkins

Editor's Note: There is a potted history on Cinema Treasures at cinematreasures.org/theaters/14806 and a much longer one on Wikipedia at en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Windmill_Theatre. Amazon lists a book *Remembering Revuedeille* at £53.30!

MANCHESTER CLARIFICATION

I know it is not the CTA's mistake but I have an observation and correction to Newsreel in Bulletin 55/3. The piece on Manchester (Central) gives information about the former New Oxford and seems to indicate its previous name as **Picture House**. It also indicates the building being on Oxford Road when indeed it is on Oxford Street. I am only a cinemas enthusiast with no professional knowledge of cinema history but I have no record of the cinema being called **Picture House**, although it may be correct and in some instances is reported as such. It opened on 15 December 1911 as the **Oxford Picture Palace** and was renamed **Oxford Theatre** in April 1927. In August of the same year it was once again renamed, this time to **New Oxford Theatre**. It kept this name until it closed on 25 October 1980 with *The Long Riders* and listed a seating capacity of 1,150. I am not doubting it was a casino for a short while but I have no memory of this. However I do have doubts about the conversion of its three upper floors into flats. As the photograph shows it does not have three upper floors! Yes, McDonalds will continue its operation on the ground floor frontage but previous to them this space for many years was occupied by a franchise forgotten by many, Lyons Corner House.

Terry Rourke

Editor's Note: The photograph shows the words **THE PICTURE HOUSE** carved into the stone façade.



GRANADA

The letter from Kevin Wheelan in the last Bulletin reminded me that Sidney Bernstein wanted the logo of Wall's Ice Cream to be painted over on the side of fridges in our Miss Candy stores. However, it was pointed out that Wall's supplied the fridges free of charge, so nothing more was said.

In 1988 Granada Film Booking closed in Golden Square and the cinemas themselves were sold to Cannon at the start of 1989. I was told Mr Sidney was looking for someone to make all his travel arrangements and I was asked if I would like to apply. I went to see Sidney in his penthouse at the top of 36 Golden Square, which was lined with Granada paperbacks (the company had just gone into publishing). I didn't get the job, which was perhaps a relief because I knew he could be a hard taskmaster. Although at 89, I think Sidney's days of travel were receding.

I have recently written articles about stage shows that Granada Theatres booked, in the British Music Hall Society Journal *The Call Boy* (Spring & Summer 2021 editions, 44 & 40 pages respectively). Anyone interested can obtain copies (£5 including p+p for each edition) from David Reed, 6 New River Crescent, Palmers Green, London, N13 5RF. I worked for Granada Theatres from 1964 to 1988.

R David Simpson

RITZ LUTON



I attach a photo I took on 8 April of the former Ritz Cinema. It's the first time I have been to have a look at the work on the building since the lockdown. There was a lot of activity on site with workmen and deliveries so I was limited in what photos I could take. At least these give you an idea of what is happening.

Margaret Burgoine

REGAL UXBRIDGE



Saw the photograph on the Heritage Casework page of the Regal Uxbridge and find it really worrying that listed cinemas seem to escape members' eyes, especially this one, which has the same listing as the Gaumont/Odeon Hammersmith. I could understand more if it was of the interior. Attaching photograph of the condition of the façade of the Regal. When I was a student I had a job near the Regal during the holidays and would walk by it twice a day – of course it was still throbbing then.

Ron Knee

WHY CINEMAS CLOSE – AN EXPLANATION FOR THE SAD

Some people are quick to blame the proprietor when a cinema closes, especially when it appears to be doing good business and it has been sold for redevelopment. Such people are likely to have little or no knowledge of that cinema's operating costs. **Most cinemas are operated for profit** and it is not good business sense to sustain continual losses. Cinema viability was first seriously threatened by the advent of television and soon after by the growing popularity of bingo, the former making considerable inroads into regular patronage and the latter offering a more profitable use for the buildings. There are of course a number of other reasons for cinema closures. The compulsory purchase of the site, depopulation of the catchment area, essential repairs at a prohibitive cost, decimating competition from a new multiplex, or in the case of leasehold property, an unsustainable rent review or termination of the lease.

It is not uncommon for a cinema to be sold to a developer who will then lease it back to the operator until they are ready to proceed with the redevelopment. An operator that has a number of cinemas may get an offer on one, which although doing good business, he/she will sell to reduce losses on others, or to fund the fitting out of a new multiplex. Where a town may lose its only cinema, the local authority might provide a subsidy for its continuation or acquire and operate it as a public amenity. The case for the retention of a cinema is weakened when it is found that those who support it are not regular cinema-goers themselves. Currently the greatest threat to the survival of cinemas is the proliferation of new forms of home entertainment and too many cinemas competing in one area, thus spreading business too thinly. The latter may also apply where there is a large number of screens in one multiplex.

There is the possibility that films will become available for home screening concurrent with their cinema release. It seems obvious that by making a new film directly available for home viewing a much bigger audience will be obtained and greater profit made. Now cinema sites, like those of pubs, are more valuable for redevelopment than their business potential. Once a closed cinema remained derelict for years, now they are snapped up for redevelopment, usually housing, which does not always include a replacement cinema.

Anon

PRESERVATION OF CINEMA FAÇADES

I cannot understand why the CTA Casework team think that preserving the façade of cinema that has been demolished is worthwhile. Mindful of the pictures in this month's Bulletin of the Dominion/Safari in Harrow I can only sympathise with the architects of the new apartments as they struggle to merge this hideous monstrosity into their design, not to mention the additional cost involved.

In my opinion, there is no merit in keeping the façade of any cinema if the cinema building itself has been lost to demolition. The whole purpose of the ornate design was presumably to entice people on the promise of the experience they would receive once inside. Far better to demolish the whole thing and then, if worthy, put a tribute to the cinema inside or a plaque on the outside to preserve its connection with local history.

I can't imagine in decades to come what people will think of these strange buildings with façades completely at odds with what exists behind. Do others feel the same or am I alone in my thinking?

Richard Hagon

HARRY GALE

Some more information on Henry James (Harry) Gale (Mike Whitaker's letter, May/June Bulletin, p32)

1873 – born Brighton

1891 – grocer's assistant, Southwark

1901 – photo agent/canvasser, Lewisham

1911 – Bioscope operator and manager, Yeovil

1913 – Manager of Bijou/Bijou Palace Bideford

c1914-1915 – manager of Magnet Cinema Bristol. During his time there he was summonsed by his deserted wife for maintenance payments.

1919-1931 – operated Reid Hall Cinema Forfar. His actual role varied over the years. In 1921 he was the proprietor, his second wife, Olive May Gale, acting as manageress. She was described as the sole lessee and proprietress in 1931, with Harry Gale the General Manager. Between 1920-1922 he bought the Music Hall in Inverness. However, business did not meet expectations and it was taken over by Inverness Picture House Ltd.

1931-1935 – bought the lease of the Coliseum Theatre, Aberystwyth and reopened it in 1932 following its conversion to a 'talkie hall'. He died there in 1935 shortly after undergoing an operation. His widow continued running the Coliseum/Coliseum Super Cinema into the 1950s, assisted by their son as cinema manager/supervisor.

Terry Hanstock

LEICESTER

Previous Bulletins mentioned the new road going through the site of the former ABC Cinema in Leicester and the area's theatrical history being commemorated in a new mural. The *Rewinding Back* article in January/February of the Bulletin mentions the opening of the Cinecenta in nearby Abbey Street in 1969. This was a further addition to the area's theatrical history. Consisting of three screens (including one for club members showing uncensored films) it later became the City Cinema showing fully censored films. I went in during its later years when it had a large notice inside saying that it was "Leicester's only cinema". Compare that with the 29 cinemas that advertised in the *Leicester Mercury* (Aylestone to Westleigh) in 1955. The City Cinema became a church after closure.

Subsequence information provided by Ted Bottle mentioned other buildings that had disappeared. One was the Royal Opera House [R] in Silver Street. This was closed in 1953 and was still closed when the family moved to Leicester in 1955. My new school was situated only a short walk from the Opera House. Situated between Silver Street and Cank Street, the gated entrance in Silver Street was sometimes swept out by a local company. One of my fellow pupils put it down to the ghost of the Opera House!



In the summer of 1960 it was announced in the local paper that the building had been sold and would reopen that Christmas. The pantomime *Sindbad the Sailor* with an actor who had made some appearances on local television (his name escapes me). The building seemed fusty with a smell of fresh paint. During the performance there was some barracking from the audience and somebody shouted, "Get off, this is Leicester". The theatre was not successful and was closed in the summer. I went round it prior to the contents being auctioned and still hold the rough two-page auction catalogue. The annual two-week break was probably part of the cause. The building was soon demolished.

Leicester by 1960 had gained a reputation as being a non-theatrical City, hence the barracking in the pantomime. However this does not square with the fact that there were five theatres in Leicester before the war. Apart from the Palace, Theatre Royal and Opera House mentioned, there were Pavilion (or Pav) in Belgrave Road and the Hippodrome in Wharf Street. Both buildings – which may have operated under different names – have now been demolished.

Ian Patterson

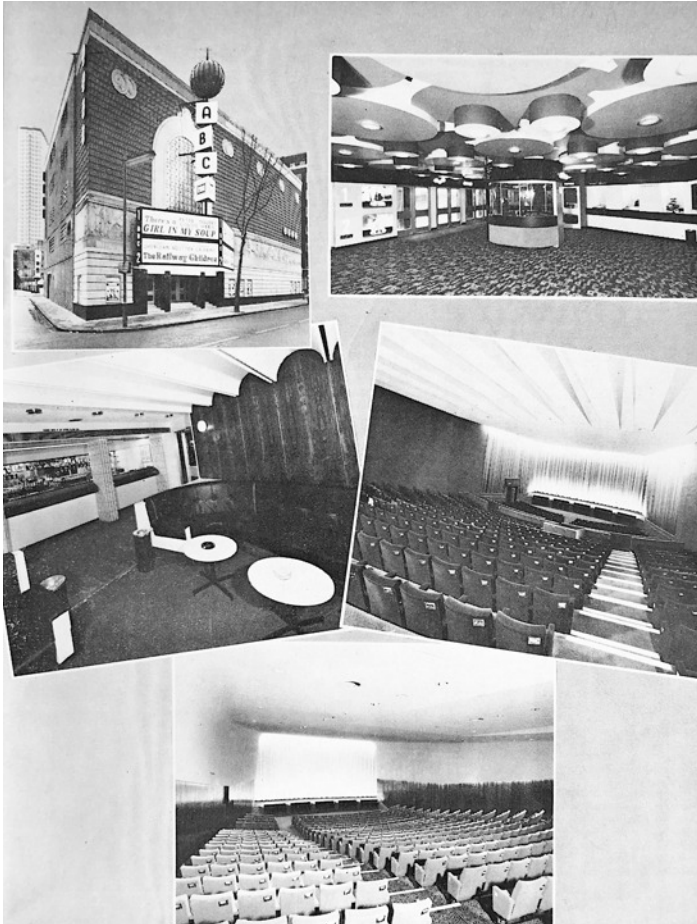
DAY TITLES



A great selection of titles on p21/22 of the last Bulletin. Here's an unusual one from 1959 for the Kinema in the Woods Woodhall Spa. The text reads: "The Kinema in the Woods welcomes you to film entertainment that is different – no flicker no light rays in the hall – the best view and seats (like a theatre) in front – and now England's unique Kinema presents..." With a custom photograph of the cinema and long, scrolling text it must have been an expensive purchase for a single-screen independent. The reference to 'no flicker' seems quite dated for 1959, maybe a throwback to earlier days.

Ben Doman





Further to the Newsreel item on p26 of the last Bulletin [and the one on p24 of this Bulletin] here's a montage of photos, from the ABC News of January 1971 on the opening of the new ABC Shaftesbury Avenue in the former Saville Theatre. Clockwise from top left: exterior, the ball on top of the A-B-C sign was lit in red segments that rotated and it was featured in the montage opening titles of the *ITV London News* in the late 1990s; foyer with pink and mauve drums & discs ceiling; ABC ①, which had a blue & green colour scheme; ABC ②, with gold seating; the bar.

Ben Doman

PITSEA (Essex)



Upon reading the article in Bulletin 55/3, after a day at the monthly archive on 22 May, Clive Polden and I went to look at the former Broadway / Century in Pitsea. Unfortunately this building never reached the CTA visit radar. Sadly the building is now very derelict and there has been a fire in the building. The electricity supply in Pitsea came after the cinema was built and the remains of the generator house are still there. The site has a sizable car park next to it, which was probably the Cinema/Bingo Hall's car park. This would be seen as a substantial redevelopment opportunity, although with what is going on in retail at the moment – do we need any more shops and the proposed flats development looks a bit too high.

Tim McCullen [photo]

CINEMA BUSINESS

AMAZON BUYS MGM

Amazon is buying MGM for nearly £6 billion as it aims to boost its streaming reach to compete with rivals Disney+ and Netflix. Amazon will have access to a library of 4,000 films and 17,000 hours of TV shows. The deal is subject to regulatory approval.

Metro – 27 May; sent in by Tom Laughlan, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

WARNER IN NEW MEDIA MERGER

US telecoms giant AT&T has agreed a merger of its Warner Media arm and rival Discovery. The deal would create an industry goliath with more than 100 offshoots, from *Harry Potter* and *Batman* to Discovery's Nature Channel. The tie-up is seen as a way to compete with streaming powers Netflix and Disney+.

Daily Record – 18 May; sent in by Tom Laughlan

DISNEY STREAMING BOOM SLOWS DOWN

In the first quarter of this year Disney+ added 8.7m subscribers to reach a total of 103.6m. But the 9% increase paled in comparison to the 29% or 21.1m rise in the previous quarter. It underlines the slowdown in demand for streaming services as western countries are slowly emerging from the pandemic. Rival Netflix, with 207.6m subscribers, has also reported a dramatic slowdown in growth.

Daily Mail – 15 May; sent in by Tom Laughlan

NO TIME FOR CINEMA TO DIE

Bond star Daniel Craig has said that films will lose their "magic" if they stop being shown in cinemas. He spoke as the future of the big-screen experience lies in the balance with the rise of streaming services and time away from the cinema because of the pandemic. Warner Bros says all of its 2021 films will be streamed at the same time they are shown in US cinemas. Daniel's final outing, *No Time to Die* has been delayed during the pandemic so it can get a theatrical release, due in the UK on 30 September.

Daily Mail, Daily Record – 15 May; sent in by Tom Laughlan

REOPENING OFFERS

Odeon reopened most of its 120 cinemas on 17 May, offering unlimited membership for £9.99 per month to entice people to return. The move comes just six months after owner AMC was rescued from bankruptcy with a £661m cash injection.

Vue, which operated 90 cinemas in the UK, is adding 5,000 new luxury recliner seats. There will also be family discounts and seat-self-order screens are being introduced.

Cineworld is offering unlimited snacks, a new 3D viewing experience and even bigger luxury seating.

Cinemas expect to have only 50% occupancy until restrictions are fully lifted.

Daily Mail – 5 May, 6 June; sent in by Margaret Burgoine, Philip Crompton, Tom Laughlan, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

THEATRES

Many theatres remain shut because it is not profitable to operate with smaller audiences. Lateral flow testing has been suggested as one way round the problem. Andrew Lloyd Webber said that there comes a point when you can't go on any more. His new £6m musical *Cinderella* is due to open on 14 July and he has said it will open, "come hell or high water". "Come to the theatre and arrest us," he said.

Daily Echo – 16 February; *Daily Mail* – 3, 9 June; sent in by Ian Patterson & Tom Laughlan

CINEWORLD

Cineworld revealed a US\$ 3.01bn loss for 2020 after revenues fell by 80%. However it showed optimism that it will benefit from pent-up demand when cinemas reopen. Families flocked to see *Peter Rabbit 2*, causing shares to rise 3.2% to 89.6p.

Daily Echo – 26 March; *Daily Mail, Metro* – 25 May; sent in by Margaret Burgoine, Tom Laughlan & Ian Patterson

SMALL ADS

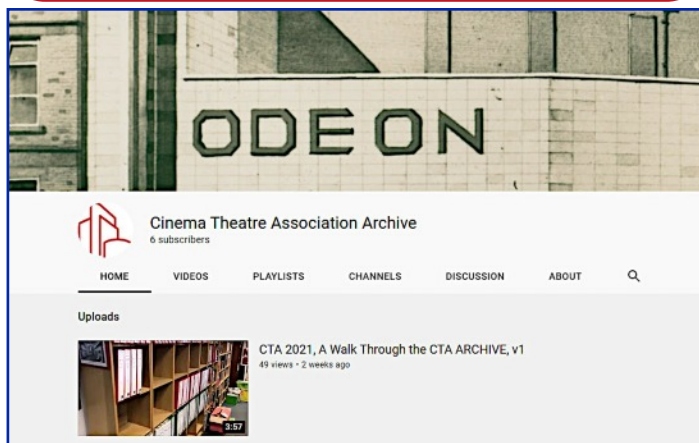
The rate for small ads from members is £3 for 25 words with name and address free, plus 15p for each extra word. Non-members rates: £5 & 25p respectively.

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

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVE



I am pleased to announce that the Archive has created a YouTube Channel where videos will be added featuring different material and collections from the Archive. I will report new videos in the Bulletin or if you wish you can seek out the Channel and subscribe to receive notifications of new content. The first video on the Channel is a walk-through of the Archive and is available now to view at: tinyurl.com/r6zbmu23



The Archive Team will shortly be embarking on a major new project to catalogue and reorganise the many slide collections held at the Archive. This long overdue project is very exciting and if you want to be involved or perhaps you have a collection of slides you are thinking of donating, now is the time to get in touch.

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist



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. 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; if you do not have Internet access call 07971752807.

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new members: Steven Hubbard, Nik Grantham, Alice Tremas, Aikaterini Koukouthaki, Neil Baker and Cinerama Film Online.

DONATIONS

Once more members have displayed their generosity by adding a donation to the renewal of their subscriptions. Our sincere thanks go to: CG Behr, TE Benton, WC Birnie, GM Booth, ME Burgoine, RD Burke, LR Carter, BR & V Chandler, M Charlesworth, B Claussen, MR Cleave, DC Cresswell, L Culver, MR Cunningham, PD Davenport, IJ Drummond, JD Elliott, SW Freeman MBE, RK Fuller, E Griffiths, CD Harrison, JR Holloway, ECW Huggins, HB Jones, DR Keeling, RA Lascaut, TDC Laughlan, AV Mabey, PV Marie, JL May, PJ Moules, B Palmer, GJ Richards, MJ Ryder, BH Snowball, MD Staunton, M Taylor, PF Thomas, WJB Thomson, DL Walkden, DB & M Williams, RF Wilson and M Wooffindin.

IN MEMORIAM

We have been sorry to learn since the last issue of the Bulletin of the deaths of the following members:

Donald Brookes from Herne Bay and Brian Saunders from Coventry.

Ray Ritmeester, Membership Secretary

DONATE TO THE CTA

WHY NOT DONATE TO THE CTA 'FREE OF CHARGE'?

Just a quick reminder to all of our members who make purchases through Amazon UK. If you sign in to your account using the SMILE login at smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1100702-0 Amazon will donate to the CTA 0.5% of your total net purchase price at absolutely no cost to you! Note that not everything you may buy is included in their offer nor are VAT, shipping fees etc. These donations are anonymous and we are just notified, at intervals, of the total amount. If you have a smart phone, you can use this QR code to reach Amazon Smile:



FEELING GENEROUS?

If, alternatively, you wish to make a personal donation using your PayPal account or debit / credit card just go to tinyurl.com/yjyxkkaa Such donations will be acknowledged in the CTA Bulletin. On the smart phone, use this QR code:



Neville C Taylor, CTA Treasurer

THE SAVOY HULL

This article was inspired by solving unidentified photo INT062 on p23 of the last Bulletin

By David A Ellis

The Savoy Cinema Hull had a makeover in 1937, having originally opened on 29 October 1923 at 6:30 with the film *Manslaughter*. The owners were Savoy's (Hull) Ltd. There was a daily matinée at 2:30 and continuous from 6:30. There was an orchestra under the direction of Mr Efim Libine. He was described as the greatest violinist in this part of the country. The cost of the Savoy in 1923 was around twenty-six thousand pounds, which included the four-thousand-pound organ. A grand piano was also a feature.

There were 650 balcony seats and 950 in the stalls. At the time the balcony was the largest in Hull. The cinema was designed by Blackmore Sykes and Co of Ruskin Chambers, Scale Lane, Hull. There was a large crush hall with settees and chairs. There was also a welcoming fireplace. The operating box was at the back of the stalls. Apart from the two projectors there was a slide lantern for advertisements. When talkies arrived on 19 August 1929 minor alterations had taken place and a new proscenium curtain was installed.



The first talkie was *The Singing Fool*, which had first been shown at the Cecil Hull for a month. At the Savoy the film attracted 26,000 patrons in a week. Western Electric sound equipment was employed. It was the fifth hall in Hull to be wired for sound.

The new-look Savoy opened on 1 November 1937 after a two-week facelift with the film *Camille*. In attendance was the Cecil orchestra, assisted by a London organist on a new Hammond organ. New seating was installed, upholstered in blue velvet.

The colour scheme of the auditorium was blue, beige and gold. The same architects from 1923 were employed. A huge canopy 12 feet in width was constructed across the whole of the front of the building. Seating became 515 in the balcony and 885 in the stalls.

The wide proscenium and stepped stage formation, successfully introduced at the Dorchester, was developed for the transformed Savoy. The opening was conducted by magistrate JR MacDonald.

The cinema closed for business on 10 July 1960. It was later demolished and the site used for retail.

Images [except #] courtesy Roger Shone



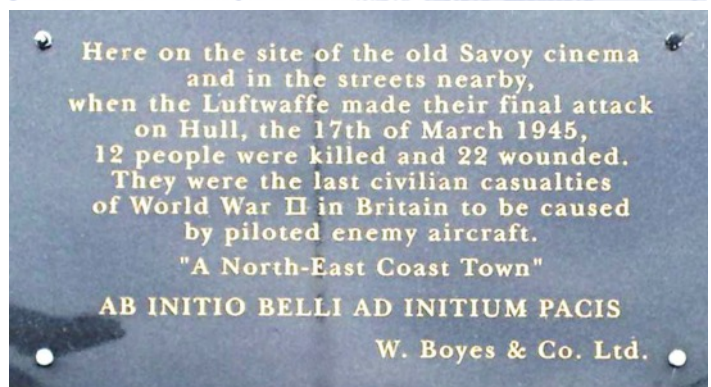
The interior of the Savoy at reopening in 1937

EARLY FILM DAYS RECALLED AT HULL REOPENING

Reference to the early days of the kinema industry was made by JR Macdonald, Hull Stipendiary Magistrate, at the reopening of the Savoy Cinema Hull, on Monday. Also present at the ceremony were Nancy Burne, film star and Messrs E Seaton and Brinley Evans of Savoy's (Hull), Ltd, owners of the Savoy.

Mr Macdonald recalled the days when films provided a finale to the old music-hall show; days which, without any reflection on the modern screen artist, some people would wish to have recalled. The standard of modern films, he said, was very high, too high some might think, since patrons nowadays expected every film to be a masterpiece. That, of course, was impossible but so far as the new Savoy was concerned, high quality entertainment would always be the aim.

Kiné Weekly – 4 November 1937



12 people, many leaving the cinema after a film, were killed on 17 March 1945 when a German Heinkel 111 opened fire with machine guns as it flew across the City; there is a plaque [above] on the site. †