



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

Vol 55 No 6

ISSN 1479-0882

November / December 2021



The Pavilion Hailsham (East Sussex) which celebrates its 100th birthday on 28 November – see Newsreel p19; photo taken September 2021



The nine-screen Cineworld in Hull, seen here as a UGC in July 2005, which has just had a major refurbishment – see Newsreel p19

FROM YOUR EDITOR

I owe an apology to Richard Hawkins. He kindly sent me a photocopy of a souvenir programme issued to mark the 50th anniversary of the Savoy/ABC Portsmouth in 1987. I'm afraid I put it to one side to deal with later and have only come across it again whilst reviewing the material for this edition. I will scan it in case I can use any of the illustrations in a future Bulletin and pass the original photocopy onto the archive. Thank you Richard.

Richard also wonders why I didn't use an item he submitted about plans to demolish the auditorium of the Odeon North End in Portsmouth and build flats. Unfortunately it was old news and had already appeared on p22 of Bulletin 53/6 (Nov/Dec 2019). I try not to duplicate items like this, unless there is significant additional material associated with it. This often happens so please don't be disappointed if I feel unable to include something you send me. I do try to print everything I get, if possible.

I am very pleased to see that our friends at London's Cinema Museum, Martin Humphries and Ronald Grant, have been given the prestigious international Jean Mitry award for their work. The museum has also won the *Time Out* 'Most Loved Local Culture Spot' award. The petition to save the museum has reached almost 60,000 signatures at the time of writing and will be delivered on 5 November. The museum itself reopened on 19 October. Further details and their full programme of events can be found on their website: www.cinemamuseum.org.uk.

I am pleased to have been able to reduce the price of my Cinema Calendars and revert to the original price of £5. Although postage is still the highest component, I have found an alternative source of toner for my printer – at a third of the price of the genuine Xerox product – and I can't tell the difference. See the advert on p30. Can I please just remind you that this is a private venture on my part and not an official CTA publication.

Finally, it only remains for me to wish you all the compliments of the season. There is a suitable graphic on p30.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



The 2021 edition of our annual *Picture House* magazine is progressing well and should reach members before the end of the year.

Allen Eyles

Quick Guide to CTA Social Media



www.cta-uk.org



www.facebook.com/cinematheatreorguk



www.twitter.com/Ctheatreassoc



www.instagram.com/cinematheatreorguk



www.ticketsource.co.uk



Zoom talks and presentations platform

Useful CTA Contacts

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

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

info@cta-uk.org : general enquires

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

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

Company limited by guarantee. Reg. No. 04428776.

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

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

PATRONS: Alan Baxter; Allen Eyles; Lucinda Lambton

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

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

All membership and subscription enquiries should be sent to

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

66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB

Items for possible inclusion in the Bulletin should be sent to

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

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

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

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

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

VICE-CHAIRMAN: Ian Meyrick +

11 Tarrant Avenue, Witney, OX28 1EE

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

59 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, TW11 0DJ

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

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

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

45 Arnold Road, Bow, London, E3 4NU

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

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

ARCHIVIST: Clive Polden archive@cta-uk.org

14 Ivychurch Gardens, Cliftonville, Margate, CT9 3YG

ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST: David Simpson

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

34 Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN

WEBMASTER: Rachel Woodforde web@cta-uk.org

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

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

66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB

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

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

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

11 Merker Terrace, Linlithgow, EH49 6DD

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

3 Swan Lane, Ystalyfera, Swansea, SA9 2JB

CTA NORTH: vacancy

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

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

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

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

© CTA BULLETIN – published six times yearly by the CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

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

Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby

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

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
MONDAY 20 DECEMBER

CTA VIRTUAL TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Celebrating Our First Year Of Virtual Talks

The CTA is delighted to announce that we have now reached the first anniversary of presenting our monthly virtual talks using Zoom and expanded our use of social media to promote the Association's excellent work and reach new audiences. Benefiting existing members and non-members, who we hope will join our membership as they enjoy our series of talks and presentations, especially arranged to appeal to enthusiasts of traditional cinema settings.

Your Christmas Treats

- ★ Our Members' Own Christmas Show held on Saturday 4 December will be **FREE** to view on Zoom (details below). We hope that this will appeal to members who have not considered joining us previously on our Zoom talks.
- ★ New Members enrolling during the month of December 2021 are offered a starter package of authoritative specialist books *Odeon 1 and 2* by cinema historian Allen Eyles (published by the BFI and CTA) – at the special price of **Two for the Price of One** (£15 + p/p for the pair) – see advert on p6.
- ★ Membership rates are shown on p2 and you can enrol online at www.cta-uk.org or by postal application to the membership secretary (address on p2) or enquiries email: subs@cta-uk.org. A form will be enclosed with membership confirmation to purchase the books on special offer.

Saturday 4 December at 5:30pm
(UK time) (Zoom talk No 13)

MEMBERS' OWN CHRISTMAS ONLINE SHOW

This is the opportunity to share with other enthusiasts your short presentations of cinema-related subjects and interests. The coverage is wide-ranging, consisting of personal recollections, photos, videos or short movie clips highlighting cinemas and cinema-related experiences. These short contributions will make up an entertaining programme of immense variety, making it an evening that appeals to the widest cross-section of cinema-lovers – not to be missed!

APPLICATIONS WELCOMED

Do you have an idea for a short contribution? Share your passion! We want to hear from you! To apply for inclusion to present an item please email Richard Norman: RichardNormanCTA@aol.com as soon as possible and not later than 28 November. Technical assistance will be gladly given for the preparation and this can be pre-recorded for presentation if preferred.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

- ★ You have a short cinema experience or story to share
- ★ You've posted a video on YouTube
- ★ You've seen interesting images on social media
- ★ You have a collection of artefacts/ephemera to share
- ★ You worked in the cinema industry

We'd love to hear from you to help make the show.



THIS IS A FREE EVENT (BUT BOOKING IS NECESSARY)

CTA talks and presentations are open to everyone – members and non-members alike. Although there is no charge for this event you still need to book a place on-line using TicketSource www.ticketsource.co.uk. Simply enter "cinema theatre association" in their search box. Please ensure that you complete the registration link that accompanies your TicketSource confirmation.



Saturday 8 January 2022 at 5:30pm

(UK time) (Zoom talk No 14) NB: Date moved from 1 Jan

Continuing the series of Notable Cinema Architects

THE WORKS OF VERITY & BEVERLEY BY DAVID BUTCHER

David Butcher, former senior partner in architects Verity and Beverley, this year celebrating their 150th anniversary, will talk about the history of the practice and in particular their cinemas built between the two world wars. The distinguished firm was founded by Thomas Verity in 1871 when he won an architectural competition to design the Criterion in Piccadilly Circus and he subsequently designed a number of other London theatres, including the original Empire in Leicester Square. After Verity's son Frank joined the firm they were responsible for the rebuilding of the Scala Theatre in Charlotte Street in 1904. After Thomas' death, Frank Verity retained his theatrical and cinema connections with the commission for the Shepherd's Bush Pavilion, considered the first such to be treated as 'serious architecture'. Samuel Beverley, Frank's son-in-law, joined early in the 1920s and thereafter they were responsible for Paramount's UK cinemas together with a number of Union Cinemas. Most of this heritage has now sadly been lost but we will be able to revisit their former glory in this talk.



Shepherd's Bush Pavilion by Frank Verity; photo taken April 2006

The talk will conclude with a Q+A, followed by the usual Open Chat where you're invited to join us in the popular 'pub chat' session discussing any cinema-related topics of your choosing to share with others.

BOOKING A TICKET

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



VISITS AND EVENTS

Christmas Cracker by the Sea

27 December; Organised by CTA Wessex

Celebrating 90 years of the Regent

Christchurch with tea, tour and film

The Directors and Management of the Regent Centre Christchurch, on the Dorset Coast, are celebrating the building's 90th birthday in the period between Christmas and the New Year.



On Bank Holiday Monday 27 December there will be tours of the refurbished auditorium [above] including its small cinema museum and a screening of CTA favourite *The Smallest Show on Earth* in 35mm. For those of you who fancy a Christmas break by the sea we are arranging a separate CTA tour lasting 90 minutes including a little film show followed by refreshments and then joining the public screening at 7:30pm.



Christchurch is a lovely seaside town and part of the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole conurbation. There's usually a market on the Monday, the ancient Priory is a must and the riverside is a beautiful place for a walk. The area has a mild climate so it should be a great place for a winter break.

At the time of writing the Travelodge in the town centre is offering rooms around £50 per night but there are lots of boutique and luxury hotels in the area if your budget permits. If members want to take a longer break, then there's the fabulous Christmas Tree exhibition planned in Bournemouth town centre and pantomimes at the Pavilion and in Poole's Lighthouse Theatre. Public transport in the area is good but this will be a Bank Holiday period, so do check for bus and train times. All hotel accommodation and travel arrangements to be sorted and paid for by CTA members.

On Boxing Day there's a re-screening of the opening film at the Regent, the 1931 version of *The Taming of the Shrew*. This is a free event open to everyone but booking needs to be done in advance, via the Regent's Box Office. www.regentcentre.co.uk

The CTA Wessex event includes the tour of the Regent, assembling at 2pm outside the main entrance in the High Street, followed by soup and sandwiches at 4pm and the film at 7:30pm. The event will end at 9:30pm in the evening.

Booking is done on-line using TicketSource www.ticketsource.co.uk



Tickets are £38 per head and numbers are limited to thirty, so don't leave it too late. Use the link above and enter "cinema theatre association" in the search box. Please ensure that you complete the registration link that accompanies your TicketSource confirmation.

As always, members are welcome to ring or email me with any questions on the area, hotels or about the event:

David Eve, email: eveninema@talk21.com mobile: 07717 793909

Coming Soon

Live Presentation

Saturday 5 February 2022 (time to be announced)

The CTA hopes to arrange a 'live' presentation to be held at Alan Baxter's Gallery, Farringdon, London. Booking will be via TicketSource. This is subject to Government restrictions and the local policy for holding meetings at the venue.

Please watch this space, the CTA's e-Newsletter and social media for announcements nearer to the date.

Other Events of Interest

(not organised by the CTA but certainly of interest to members)

Christmas Movie Spectacular

Presented by Backyard Cinema at the Troxy Stepney,

490 Commercial Road, London, E1 0HX

1 December - 30 December (Closed 25 & 26 December)

Performances daily at 11:30, 15:30 & 19:30

(doors open 1 hour before)



The Grade II listed Art Deco style Troxy Stepney (architect George Coles), originally opened in 1933 with 3,520 seats, will become a temporary full-time cinema for the whole of December 2021 when Backyard Cinema will be presenting three Christmas themed films; Will Farrell in *Elf* [PG] (2003) is the morning/afternoon performances. Macaulay Culkin in *Home Alone* [PG] (1990) is also afternoon performances and Hugh Grant in *Love Actually* [15] (2003) is the evening performances. Award winning George the Poet and the Some Voices Choir will also add some 'live' input to the entertainment on offer.

Seats from £15.00 are bookable in advance and for more details see the Troxy Stepney website: troxy.co.uk. No prams/buggies allowed and no under 6 years old. Those under 14 years old require an adult to accompany them. Only 15+ allowed for the evening performances.

[Cinema Treasures: cinematreasures.org/theater/3775](http://CinemaTreasures.cinematreasures.org/theater/3775)

Photo by Ken Roe, November 2015

London Film Fairs

Sunday 28 November 2021 & Sunday 6 February 2022

Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1H 0DG

Details at www.londonfilmconvention.co.uk

PUBLICATIONS

Back Numbers Available

PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

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

No 6	£1.50	Television in the Cinema; Atherley Southampton; Hippodrome, Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; ABC in NW London.
No 16	£3.00	Dominion London; 3000 plus; John Broadley remembers.
No 17	£3.00	Special Issue featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; Ideal Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; Granada Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; Albert Hall Sheffield; Regal Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 22	£3.50	Burrell, Foley, Fischer; Palace Theatre London; David Nye.
No 24	£4.50	Oldest Cinema - Harringay; Cardiff Round-up; Odeon Miscellany.
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Committee's Choice; Gaumont Managers; Carlton Swansea;.
No 26	£4.50	Paramount Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; Electric Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New Victoria/Apollo; Whiteladies Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; Torbay Cinema; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; Apollo Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: <i>Essoldo</i> – A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the Essoldo Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New Victoria Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	Beaufort Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophone lighting; Imitations of Odeon; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; The Clifton Circuit; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the Electric Palace Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated Cinemas; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; Palace Conwy; Carlton Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two Regals; Odeon North Finchley; Majestic Oxford; Films at the Royal Albert Hall.
No 40	£6.00	Tolmer Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham – a Granada man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 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.



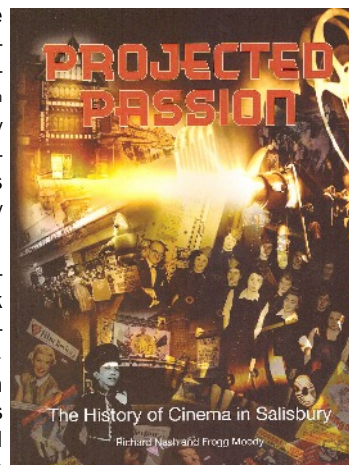
Price: £6.00 per binder, supplied in a special postal carton. Please add £3.40 to your total order for post and packing.

Ordering details below.

New Publication

Projected Passion – The History of Cinemas in Salisbury by Richard Nash and Frogg Moody. 150 pages, A4 paperback, illustrated. £12.95 (plus £3.40 postage)

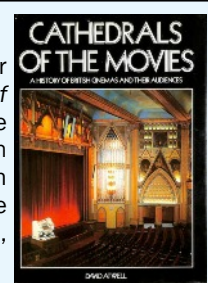
This book tells the story of the cinemas in Salisbury from the earliest showings at the annual charter fair up until the end of the 20th Century. Cinema pioneer Albany Ward is covered and his beginnings with local garrison theatres and the Plaza at nearby Amesbury are also featured.



Salisbury once had three fine cinemas and the latter part of this book relates in some detail the campaign to save the last of these – the Gaumont Palace / Odeon – in the 1980s. This cinema, with its Grade I listed foyer and Grade II auditorium, was threatened with closure and demolition. Members may recall that the late Alan Richardson, who was once a CTA committee member, was the leading light in this campaign, which resulted in a public enquiry at which the campaigners were successful and the Odeon is still open today. It is good to have this battle recorded here, together with much other fascinating information and a wealth of interesting photographs.

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).



Ordering

For post and packing: total order value up to £20.00 please add £3.40, total order value from £20.01 to £40.00 please add £4.40, total order value from £40.01 to £60.00 please add £6.40. For larger orders and overseas, please contact the Sales Officer, email: sales@cta-uk.org. Orders to Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales, 34, Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN. Cheques/POs payable to Cinema Theatre Association, or send credit/debit card number with expiry date and security code. A complete sales list is available by sending an SAE and all the books can be seen on the CTA website www.cta-uk.org where you can also place your order using PayPal. A sales list is sent with every order.

HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

No meeting of the Heritage Casework Committee has been convened during the intervening period between deadlines for the previous and current editions of the Bulletin. The appended report therefore comprises brief particulars detailing cases that are currently active.

Grade II* Listed



The Carlton Islington in October 2014

Proposals for alteration to the Carlton in Islington and development of adjacent land have been propounded somewhat regularly over a number of years. The current scheme envisages tolerable construction on ground situated to the rear of the cinema; however, the concept of levelling the rake of the stalls is unacceptable.

An investigation is ongoing into a report of vegetation growing atop the façade of the Regal in Uxbridge.

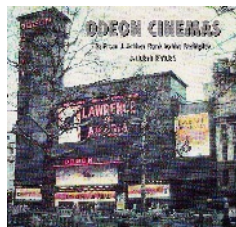
Grade II Listed

It transpires that the latest plan for the Regal in Kingston-upon-Thames envisages residential and office accommodation above the auditorium. It has been suggested that the design team should visit the Granada at Clapham Junction in order to inspect the successful integration of the stanchions within the historic original fabric of that cinema, which proved necessary for support of an equivalent structure.

The Association is to contact the conservation and regeneration staff of Liverpool City Council in an attempt to promote progress on the apparently dormant plans for rehabilitation of the Forum.

All you need to know about... ODEON

These two volumes, by Allen Eyles, provide a comprehensive history of the Odeon circuit, from its beginnings in the 1930s up to the multiplex era. Fully illustrated in b/w and colour.



Now at reduced prices!

ODEON 1 – Oscar Deutsch Entertains Our Nation – £15.00

ODEON 2 – From J Arthur Rank to the Multiplex – £15.00

Buy both Odeon 1 & 2 together for £27 (plus postage)

Also available – THE GRANADA THEATRES – £18.99.

Last few copies!

Please add £3.40 to your order for postage.

Available from the Sales Officer – address on p5.

The decision of Scott Cinemas Limited not to rebuild the Regent in Lyme Regis has stimulated formation of a pressure group advocating reinstatement of the building.

Progress on refurbishment of the Ritz in Nuneaton has stalled following the regrettable deaths of two leaders of the religious movement undertaking the project.

Unlisted



The Odeon Bridgwater as a Scott Cinema in February 2006

A new cinema is currently under construction in Bridgwater, which places the future of the Odeon in doubt. Unfortunately, The Twentieth Century Society has declined to apply for listed status for this notable building, which exhibits the distinctive style of architect T Cecil Howitt.



The St George's Hall / Granada Bristol in March 2006

A local campaign that aims to preserve the St George's Hall Electric Palace in Bristol's Redfield area is gaining momentum. See Newsreel p18.

A proposal to redevelop the Regal in Colchester, which would have included a facsimile of architect Cecil Masey's front elevation, has been rejected by Colchester Borough Council.

The latter-day cladding has been removed from the façade of the Dominion in Harrow and concurrent demolition of the auditorium has been initiated. A degree of disquietude arises concerning stability of the frontage during these operations, prior to its integration into the new structure.

An organisation providing support to young persons currently occupies The Point in Milton Keynes and aspires to purchase the premises. See Newsreel p21.

The CTA has responded to Historic England's consultation report upon listing of the Regal in Rotherham.

In concert with the local conservation officer and Save Britain's Heritage, the Association is canvassing against total demolition of the Sandonia in Stafford and pressing for retention of the elegant faience façade.

CINEMA ARCHITECTURE AND ATMOSPHERE

A report of the event at the **BFI Southbank**, London on 23 September 2021 by Adam Unger



Shows the setting-up before the show in NFT ① [1]

The CTA participated in this special event, which also featured archive films on the subject. This was originally scheduled to take place in NFT ② but was transferred to the main auditorium, NFT ①, which was quite fitting, as historically it is the earliest part of the BFI complex. An introduction was given by Will Fowler of the BFI, who is also a CTA member. Beginning with the documentary, *Odeon Cavalcade*, made by the Arts Council in 1973, with which many members will be familiar. It stands repeated viewing, as it features two of the important Odeon architects, Cecil Clavering and Robert Bullivant, who provide invaluable first-hand accounts of the designing and challenges they faced in developing the Odeon house-style. The film can be viewed for free on the BFI Player: tinyurl.com/zk4z76a9.

This was followed by *Cinema in East London* (1979), focusing on this area, with personal reminiscences about going to the cinema in the early days. *Unveiling Eros and West End Cinemas* (1985), comprised a short montage of West End cinemas and the grand unveiling of the relocated Eros in Piccadilly Circus. *Opening of Whitehaven Film Theatre* (1972), included an interview with Christopher Miles, director of the then recent feature film, *The Virgin and the Gypsy*, which was to be shown at the new Film Theatre. *Opening of Chingford Odeon* (1935) was a fascinating recently discovered film, showing the exterior being prepared before its opening.



Interior of the Regent Street Theatre [2]

Richard Gray then gave a short presentation, which was a retrospective look at the cases handled by the CTA. The following nine cinemas were highlighted as lost or radically altered in the past 60 years: Davis Croydon; Empire Leicester Square; Trocadero Elephant & Castle; Odeon Leicester Square; Plaza Regent Street; Ionic Golders Green; Beaufort Birmingham; Odeon Worthing and Odeon Elephant & Castle.

By 1988 the CTA had resolved to act to prevent these appalling losses. The government statutory listing system was explained and the different grades in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The first three cinemas to be listed in 1973, were the Tooting Granada (now listed Grade I); the New Victoria London (now the Apollo Victoria Theatre) and the Electric Palace Harwich, Essex; the latter two are now listed Grade II*. There have been subsequent cinema listings added. The two recent CTA successes had been the saving of the 1920s interior of the Regent Street Cinema in London and the Empire Haymarket was saved from demolition and subsequently Grade II listed. He concluded that the casework program continues throughout the country with around 100 cases handled annually.



The entrance to the BFI Southbank under Waterloo Bridge [2]

Allen Eyles was introduced next, giving a brief history about the development of the National Film Theatre, now BFI Southbank. Beginning with the Telekinema, built for the Festival of Britain in 1951 to showcase documentary film, including 3D and closed-circuit television, it was designed by the modernist architect, Welles Coates, to seat 400. Interesting images were shown of the auditorium, with the projection room located in the balcony front. The building then became the first temporary home of the National Film Theatre in 1952. In 1957 the BFI had to vacate and relocated to the Southbank under Waterloo Bridge. This location required an innovative approach, the ceiling being suspended from the bridge independent of the side walls, successfully undertaken by the LCC architect, Norman Engleback. The new building opened in October 1957. NFT ① is fan-shaped in plan and has been altered over the years, the most notable loss being the chain-mail curtain. In recent years, changes have included acoustic lining on the walls as well as technical upgrades. NFT ② was added in 1970, with a rough-cast wall finish, green-painted originally to match the seating fabric. The Museum of the Moving Image was constructed in 1988, closing in 1999, due to falling admissions, with the MOMI theatre becoming NFT ③. In 2007 the NFT was enlarged, taking space from the former museum, to include a new small cinema (the studio), a shop, bar and restaurant. The NFT was also rebranded BFI Southbank, something of a contentious issue. Interesting early images supported this talk.

The final speaker, Alexa Raisbeck, a Technical Supervisor for the BFI, has also been working as a film projectionist for over 17 years. She is engaged on a current project documenting the working lives of female projectionists. A live feed had been set up in the projection box, where we were able to have a tour of the box shown on the NFT screen. Alexa drew attention to the film projectors for 35/70mm film screenings that were installed in NFT ① some years ago, which have had to be replaced due to the difficulty of obtaining spare parts. The classic Philips DP70 projector has now replaced them, which will be easier to maintain.

We are most grateful to Richard Gray, Allen Eyles and to Alexa Raisbeck for their presentations. Thanks also to Will Fowler and Richard Norman for their important contributions and also the BFI staff. This was a wonderful opportunity to promote the CTA and it is hoped that this is the start of future collaborations between the BFI and the CTA.

Photos: [1] Richard Norman;

[2] Harry Rigby – both taken 30 January 2017, the CTA's 50th anniversary day

BACK TO THE WEST END

A report of the CTA visit to London's West End on Monday 27 September 2021 by Adam Unger

This was our first physical event in over 18 months, on a bright sunny afternoon, commencing at the flagship Odeon Luxe Leicester Square. We were welcomed by the resident organist, Donald MacKenzie, who had invited us to a tour inside. Unfortunately, the Compton organ couldn't be played due to a fault with the lift motor but we were able to tour at stalls and circle level.



The foyer of the Odeon Luxe Leicester Square [2]



The auditorium of the Odeon Luxe Leicester Square [3]

The Odeon, which opened in 1937, was the collaboration of several architects; Harry Weedon, Andrew Mather and Thomas Braddock, who designed a distinctive coal black exterior and a well-conceived auditorium of ribbed plasterwork, with the famous 'flying ladies' by Raymond Briton Riviere. In 1967 a major modernisation scheme destroyed much of this original decoration, leaving just the ribbed covered plasterwork intact at circle level. The building has undergone several makeovers since then and this latest reincarnation is the best so far. At stalls level, much use has been made of wood on the walls, which has greatly assisted the acoustics of the organ and the sound system, which is Dolby Atmos along with the Dolby Vision system.

The 'flying ladies' have been reinstated again, albeit to a smaller scale. Luxury recliner seating and the enlarged entrance foyer has reduced seating capacity to 800 from 1,683 previously. A surprise was being shown a surviving remnant of the Alhambra Theatre, previously on the site, which was a blocked-up window, high up on an exterior wall.

We made our way across to the newly completed Odeon Luxe West End, on the site of the former Leicester Square Theatre / Odeon West End, which forms part of the Londoner hotel development. The exterior is clad in blue tiling with a vertical emphasis, with the Odeon signage featuring prominently on the corner. It is most regrettable that the original frontage wasn't retained, which could have been easily restored and incorporated in the new scheme. You descend several levels by escalator to the two screens, arriving in the bar and foyer. This development is an 'iceberg' scheme, being very deeply excavated.



The Odeon Luxe West End [4]

Before we went in, Richard Gray gave a history on the Leicester Square Theatre, which opened in 1930, designed by Andrew Mather. The two-balconied auditorium was remodelled in 1968, then in later years renamed and twinned, before closing in 2015 for redevelopment. The largest screen has 168 seats featuring recliner seating, Dolby Vision and Dolby Atmos, with a predominant use of black throughout.



The Empire Leicester Square [4]

Coming up to surface, we viewed the exterior of the Cineworld, formerly the Empire. When opened in 1928 as MGM's showcase, it was the largest (over 3,000 seats) and one of the most opulent cinemas in the West End, designed by the American cinema specialist Thomas W Lamb in conjunction with FGM Chancellor of the Frank Matcham practice. The High Renaissance style interior was gutted in 1961 and replaced with a new cinema at circle level with a Mecca ballroom below. The 1962 auditorium, by architect George Coles, was subdivided into two new screens, opening in 2014. The strong American influence can be seen in the Venetian arch façade, which is a near copy of Lamb's design for the Albee Theater Cincinnati, Ohio. An interesting survivor is the exit on Leicester Street, the frontage of which dates from the 19th Century Empire Theatre.



The Warner/Vue in April 2016 [3]

The Warner/Vue of 1938 was designed by Edward A Stone and Thomas Somerford for Warner Brothers, with a well-composed façade, featuring a concave front, setback tower and bas reliefs by Bainbridge Copnall, representing Sight and Sound. The Vue must have undergone the most makeovers of any cinema in the West End, from modernisation as a single auditorium, through to twinning and further subdivision; the most extensive being demolition, save for the façade, for nine screens in 1993. Unfortunately, the façade wasn't sympathetically handled, with the insertion of a glazed corner, along with the treatment of the stonework, giving it an artificial sheen. In 2017 it underwent a makeover, including installing Sony Finitry and Dolby Atmos.



The Rialto Coventry Street [4]

Moving on out of the Square, to the north side of Coventry Street is the former Rialto, which became a casino in 2002. This was one of the earliest 'deluxe' cinemas in the West End when it opened in 1913 as the West End Cinema, being renamed Rialto in 1924. The architect was Hippolyte Jean Blanc, responsible for the tall narrow exterior, the large arched window was previously partially obscured by advertising when a cinema. Horace Gilbert did the interior, which featured a particular good Edwardian Baroque auditorium, oval in plan. Incorporated in the basement was the famous Café De Paris nightclub. Twentieth Century Fox took on the Rialto in 1954 in addition to the Carlton Haymarket, that year. It is now a listed building.

Almost opposite, is the Prince of Wales Theatre, designed by Robert Cromie as a live theatre in 1937 and, of course, known for his many cinemas. This rather streamlined exterior in artificial stone has a corner cylindrical tower. Unfortunately, it was subjected to a refurbishment in 2004, resulting in heavy alterations to the exterior and its good art deco auditorium, despite being Grade II listed.

Arriving in the Haymarket, the bland looking block once housed the Capitol, which opened in 1925, designed by Andrew Mather, incorporating the Kit Kat Club below. The exterior, in Portland stone, was in an imposing but somewhat antiquated style, even for that date, being more Edwardian Baroque, as was also the elaborate auditorium. Subsequently, it was reconstructed in 1937 and renamed the Gaumont, designed by WE Trent. This in turn was replaced in 1962 by the single-floor Odeon (the Gaumont having closed in 1959) in the basement – the rest of the building was converted to offices. The exterior was shorn of all its decorative work and new windows inserted. Sadly, the Odeon closed in 1999 and lies disused.



The foyer of the Carlton/Empire Haymarket [4]

A short walk down, we arrived at the Carlton/Empire of 1927, designed by Frank Verity and Samuel Beverley for Paramount Pictures, intended for both film and live theatre use. It opened with the play *Lady Luck*, becoming a full-time cinema in 1930. In 1954, Twentieth Century Fox acquired the Carlton and it closed in 1977 for subdivision, with the stage being demolished for offices. It reopened as the Classic in 1979. Since then, it has been taken over by other operators and, under an exchange deal, it was renamed the Empire in 2017. The Italianate exterior is in Portland stone, with the Paramount trademark in the window pediments. The impressive entrance foyer is in the Adam style and has been sympathetically treated with chandeliers reinstated. We made our way up to the main screen ①, in the former upper balcony, the other two screens being in the former stalls area.



Screen ① auditorium at the Carlton/Empire Haymarket [4]

Much of the original plasterwork has remained intact in screen ① and you gain a real sense of the scale and atmosphere of the original auditorium. The principal decoration lies in the main ceiling and a deep frieze along the side walls, in the Italian Renaissance style. The beamed ceiling has laylights, which were originally illuminated and still retains two of the Lalique style glass light fittings. A larger screen has been installed in recent years. The Empire became a major campaign and success for the CTA casework team, when under threat of demolition by the freeholder, the Crown Estate, for a shopping precinct, it was granted Grade II listing in 2018. Since then, they have announced that the cinema will be refurbished and the casework team will continue to be consulted on this.



The London Pavilion Piccadilly Circus [4]

Along to Piccadilly Circus, where we stopped opposite the London Pavilion, which must have been the most photographed of all cinemas, appearing on countless postcards of the Circus. Dating from 1885 as part of the new street plan for the newly created Shaftesbury Avenue, the architects were James Ebenezer Saunders and RJ Worley, with films first shown in 1908. The stucco exterior features a colonnade on the principal frontage – however it is in a poor state of repair, along with tacky plastic signage. The interior was remodelled for United Artists in 1934 by FE Chancellor in a restrained art deco style with two balconies, becoming a full-time cinema. It closed in 1981 and was converted to retail use.

A short distance to Lower Regent Street took us to the former Plaza, one of the West End's most important cinemas and certainly one of its greatest losses. Built for Paramount, it was the first West End outlet to be built for an American studio. It opened in 1926, designed by Frank Verity. The fine stone exterior in the Italian Renaissance style is listed, incorporating a dome on the corner – atop its lantern is the Paramount trademark. We learnt that there was originally a water display that cascaded down the wave-patterned dome but not surprisingly this ceased early on. The interior was also in the Italian Renaissance style with very fine elaborate plasterwork, with two balconies like its sister theatre, the Carlton. This all survived until 1967, when the building was gutted for two new auditoria. In 2004 a comprehensive redevelopment took place with offices, a cinema complex and a Tesco on the ground floor. The CTA was involved, at the time, in the salvage of plasterwork, which is now on display in the foyer of the new offices in Jermyn Street.

We made our final visit to the former New Gallery Regent Street. Westmorland House by Sir John Burnet, Tait and Lorne was built in the early twentieth century, forming part of the redevelopment of Regent Street. It's a striking exterior, described as 'proto-Modernist', part of which is the entrance to the cinema, which opened in 1925, designed by Charles Nicholas and JE Dixon-Spain for Provincial Cinematograph Theatres, a rebuild of an earlier one of 1913. An early West End closure in 1953, it became the Seventh Day Adventist Church, who vacated in 1990. After some disuse, it became a Habitat shop and currently is a Burberry store, with the organ surviving.

On our visit, we also passed the sites of former newsreel theatres, including the Monseigneur News Theatre Leicester Square and Eros Piccadilly Circus. Although covering a relatively small area, we had viewed some ten cinemas in the space of three hours, such is the density in this part of London.

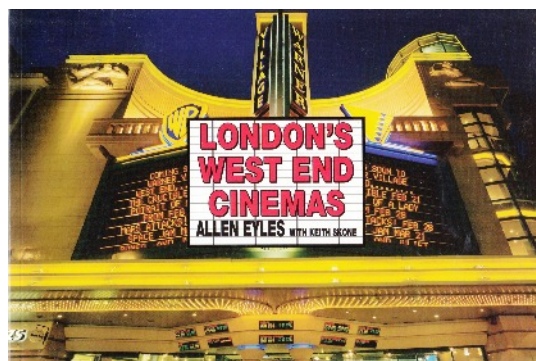


The Plaza Lower Regent Street [4]

Our thanks to Richard Gray for organising and leading this walk and to Ray Ritmeester for the visit notes and getting us access to the Odeon Luxe West End and Empire Haymarket – also to the staff and management who made us feel so welcome.

Photos: [1] the author; [2] Brian Peters; [3] Harry Rigby; [4] Ian Francis

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

THE RITZ CINEMA NAME HAS GONE FULL CIRCLE

By Tin McCullen

The item on p28 of Bulletin 55/3 (May/June 2021) says that a new Ritz three-screen cinema is to be constructed in Workington Town Centre. It opened on 30 September, 33 years after the former Ritz closed. The auditoria seat 54,55 & 60 and are on the top floor of John Peel House and are accessed by two lifts or via "wide staircases", promoted as providing healthy exercise!

The old Ritz, operated by Graves Cinemas, seated 1,400 in stalls and circle and was drop-wall tripled on 17 May 1982. The site closed in February 1988 for a commercial redevelopment and it was demolished a month later; however it was not the last film in town.

Graves Cumberland reopened a cinema in the former Oxford a few days after the closure of the Ritz. The Oxford cinema dates from 1923 and closed for films in 1971 to become a disco until the new cinemas, seating 265 and 165 opened and was called the *Rendezvous*. At the time of the 1995 CTA visit, it was rumoured that a third screen would be added. However, that was not to be as a new purpose-built multiplex, which Graves were to operate, was opened on a site some three miles from the town at a retail centre called Dunmail Park. This saw the *Rendezvous* close on 24 May 2001 and it is now a Wetherspoon's pub.

The *Plaza* multiplex opened on 25 May 2001 as a six-screen cinema seating 307, 229, 174, 95, 95 & 95. It was proposed at one point that two more screens be added but this did not happen. This was one of the few privately-run multiplex cinemas. The *Plaza* closed on 19 March 2020 as Graves Cinemas were unable to agree terms on the lease. A lot of other shops, ie Arcadia, also had retail space there. Now we have a Ritz triple again in the Town Centre in Ladies' Walk, along with a purpose-built Opera Bingo Hall, which was relocated from the Opera House, which was demolished in April.

Photos by: [1] the author; [2] David Eve; [3] CTA Archive

Editor's Note: A 2' 13" video of the demolition of the Opera House Workington can be seen on YouTube at youtu.be/e1KN39wFW2k.



The old Ritz Workington on the last day [3]



The Rendezvous (former Oxford) Workington [1]



The new Ritz Workington [2]



The six-screen Plaza Dunmail Park, Workington [1]

ABC CINEMAS' POST-WAR HOUSE STYLE

By Ben Doman



Later shot of the Carlton Upton Park auditorium, still much as it was on its 1953 rebuild, although the lantern light fittings in the ceiling have been replaced. ^[1]

At the end of the second world war ABC found itself with a circuit of cinemas that were suffering badly from heavy use during the war years and several that had suffered hits from enemy action. Rebuilding started with the Carlton Upton Park in 1953, where the frontage and foyer block had been destroyed. Architect for the rebuild was CJ Foster and was really an exercise in making do with what was remaining, with some modern touches. One innovation was a new covering of rich burgundy wool serge panels to replace the plaster ceiling, which had been damaged beyond repair. Light fittings using fluorescent tubes were installed to save energy in the foyers.

Foster had started with the newly formed in-house architect's department at ABC in 1929, having previously worked for PCT (Provincial Cinematograph Theatres) for three years, under chief architect WR Glen. His first job for ABC was the Forum Liverpool, opened in 1931.



Regal Gloucester on opening. Still very much a pre-war Glen layout, with central staircase to the stalls, twin pay boxes and stairs to the circle. No proscenium arch as such but the design of the splay walls is incorporated into the stage opening. ^[1]

Further redecorations followed, such as the Castle Merthyr Tydfil in 1954, which usually involved repainting, new carpets & drapes and upgrades of the heating, projection and sound equipment, keeping the theatres pretty much architecturally as they were. Three cinemas that had been in the process of being built at the outbreak of war could finally be completed. The Regal Gloucester opened in 1956 as a new building. Although its roots were still in the pre-war Glen designed cinemas, there were some 1950s modern touches. Fluorescent lighting was used extensively. The auditorium design featured innovations, such as the auditorium ceiling stepping down in floating panels, the edges illuminated by concealed lights. The ABC News of the time mentions the "now familiar Abbotsford design" carpet being fitted in the auditorium. Dawson's Seating provided their Special No1 seat, ABC's standard model. The ABC News goes on to say: "... the 1,466 Dawson chairs are covered in the warm red-rust worsted velvet that is now characteristically ABC."



Dawson's Special No. 1 seat ^[3]



ABC Woolwich auditorium with design features on the side walls and stepped down ceiling edged with concealed lighting. ^[1]

Refurbishments continued through the 1950s, such as the Elite Nottingham and the Palladium Oldham. Major changes were reserved for the foyer areas; modern touches in the auditoria were limited to new light fittings and modern treatments of the proscenium and splay walls, where an effort was made to harmonise the two to give a continuous treatment to the front wall. Screen curtains were of an oyster or mushroom colour, with multicoloured footlights. Foyers tended to have new Terrazzo polished marble flooring in various colours.

A demolish and rebuild of the Theatre Royal Preston added some innovations such as a multicoloured display on the frontage, as mentioned in the *Ideal Kinema* April 1959: "To make the façade of the theatre as attractive after dark as it is in daylight, a number of vertical features have been placed on the front elevation, which conceal continuous runs of red, green and blue fluorescent tubing; all are electronically controlled and can be made to rise and fall in the intensity of any colour or allowed to cycle continuously over the range of the spectrum." Describing the auditorium lighting: "The stage draperies incorporate the proscenium and intermediate curtains; they are in



Rebuilt ABC Preston frontage ^[4]



ABC Preston foyer. A well-stocked kiosk greets patrons, with pay box at the far end. [1]

pastel shades of pale pink and oyster and are lit from the balcony front. Auditorium lighting, in the main, is of an indirect nature and comprises 550 feet of fluorescent tubes, with an electronic control that allows the intensity to be reduced or increased at any desired speed. The dimming sequence is pre-determined so that the lighting dims from the back of the auditorium to the stage and vice-versa when the lighting is switched on, the speed of transition being set to a value that will cause patrons no ocular discomfort."

There were still variations in carpet designs, designed for specific theatres, although the auditoria usually had the standard deep red base with small multicoloured design, which was probably the Abbotsford design mentioned at Gloucester. Preston was the exception in that the standard design was used in the foyer and a new design used in the auditorium, as noted in the *Ideal Kinema* in April 1959: "The circle foyer and women's powder room are carpeted with a fine woollen Wilton carpet made by James Templeton and Co Ltd. It was specially created for the theatre. A great deal of thought was put into the designing of this carpet; the requirements were that it had to be contemporary, yet dignified, bright and cheerful, yet practicable. It was decided, therefore, that two shades of grey should form the background effect, with the introduction of coral, straw and black as the top colours. With this combination of colour, it gave the interior decorator a free hand with the walls, ceiling, etc. The carpet for the entrance hall is, of course, a very neat all-over repeating design. It has a rich red ground shade and the little flecks of blue, yellow, white and green give it a stained-glass appearance." James Templeton and Co Ltd had its roots in a shawl making company set up in 1829. The company went on to become one of the biggest carpet manufacturing companies in the world, at the forefront of mechanised carpet production and based in Scotland.



An unusual early 'multi-arm' light fitting still in use in screen ① of the Majestic Kings Lynn, which was under ABC control between 1937 and 1975. Two of the original straight shades have been replaced with the later bulged ones, presumably after breakage. [2]

'Multi-arm chandeliers' were introduced in the early 1960s, at sites such as Norwich, Southend and Wimbledon. These were a bronze colour and had multiple arms that came out of a central boss, curving up and over. Tubular glass shades were fitted at the end of each arm, in white or soft pink. These fittings were nicknamed the 'spider chandeliers' as they looked like spiders' legs. There were several versions of these. Double tiered versions with the boss mounted at the end of several long tubes hanging down in a circle were reserved for larger areas, such as the auditorium. Smaller single tiered versions were used under balconies and in foyers. There was an even a compact version for very low-ceilinged areas. Gold screen curtains made an appearance at the newly refurbished Palladium Oldham, becoming the new standard.

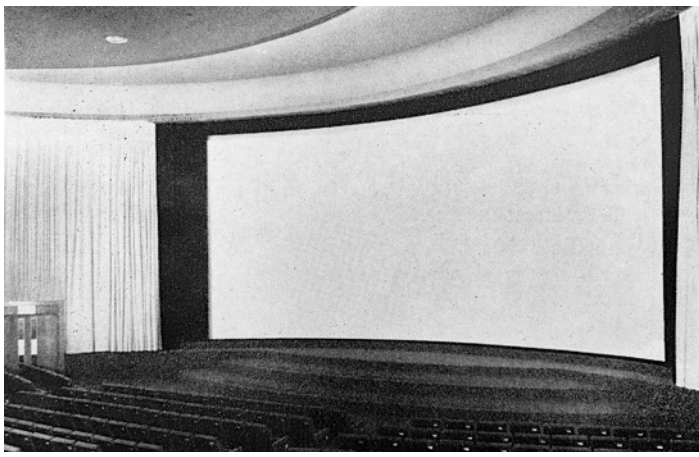
The breakthrough in creating a new house style came in 1961 with the new ABC Sheffield. The site for the cinema was an awkward one on a steep hill and it was decided that a revolutionary design was needed. The entrance was to be placed at the top of the hill and would use the downward slope for a single level stadium-type auditorium. ABC executive W Bill Cartledge flew out to Germany to visit the Gloria Palast in West Berlin that had recently opened with just such a single level auditorium, to see if there were any ideas that could be incorporated. Architect CJ Foster said in an interview in the June 1961 edition of the *ABC News*: "...the ABC Sheffield is a stadium-type theatre, accommodating 1,330 seats liberally set out and having perfect vision from all parts of the auditorium. In designing the auditorium the main aim was to draw all eyes to the very large screen. This was achieved by creating a flowing curve of walls and curtaining, highlighted at the top and bottom, throwing a uniform light onto the full rich gold curtains." The ceiling was finished in a dark blue, to suggest a midnight sky, changing to a "rich cushion of gold and violet" towards the rear of the auditorium.



Auditorium of the ABC Sheffield on opening. Screen curtains continue around the cutaway side walls, lit top and bottom with dimmable concealed fluorescents. The portable electric organ was a temporary installation for the opening. [1]

The opening brochure describes the auditorium lighting: "On entering the auditorium the attention of the patron is immediately drawn to the vast area of curtains; these are completely outlined by fluorescent lighting, as is also the suspended ceiling from which a scattered pattern of sixty fittings of tungsten lighting blends with the indirect fluorescent lighting, of which there is a total of over 1,000 feet in the various lighting coves."





The sweeping 70mm screen and curtains at the ABC New Bristol Centre, lit from the top by concealed fluorescents. The auditorium was later badly split with the curved side walls meeting a new straight wall that bisected the room – see p8 Bulletin 47/6. [5]

The stadium design, with curtaining covering a huge screen and continuing around to the cut away side walls and a prominence of a bar area became the standard for future new builds, such as at the ABC Cine-Bowl at Hanley in 1963. The ABC New Bristol Centre (1966) had a throwback to the past with the inclusion of a balcony, although this did not overhang the stalls. The area underneath housed staff & projection rooms and the bar and was probably designed this way due to the limited footprint of the site, being part of a larger Mecca complex of ice rink, bingo and dance halls. A new design of carpet was seen at Bristol, as described in the opening brochure: "The Wilton carpet throughout the theatre is in an attractive new overall design in bronze and black picked out in gold.". The base colour of bronze was overlaid with small shapes in black, with gold highlights. The lower side walls were covered in a curled-pile bronze carpet.



A very worn example of the red design of Wilton carpet first seen at Bristol, still in situ at the rear of the balcony at Komedia (former ABC Beau Nash) Bath. [2]



ABC had used Dawson's Special No1 seats for many years but during 1956 Dawson's started marketing a new, more modern seat, christened the Continental. In a break from the traditional sprung base the Continental used Aero-preen moulded foam for the cushion and back. The traditional deep bucket back design was replaced with a straight back. This design was modified to become the Regent (Blackpool & Hanley) and then the Columbia Mk 1 (Bristol), with flat steel standards rather than the Continental's tubular ones, becoming the ABC standard

model. The seats were covered in a 'grey jaspered worsted velvet' – red, red-rust, blue, bronze, green or yellow main colour with thin lines of grey woven through. Distributed by ABC's in-house Pathé Equipment company, variations appeared in many universities, law courts and halls in the late 60s and early 70s. There was also a Columbia Mk 3 model that was slightly wider and had thicker seat and back padding that was used as luxury seating in some theatres.

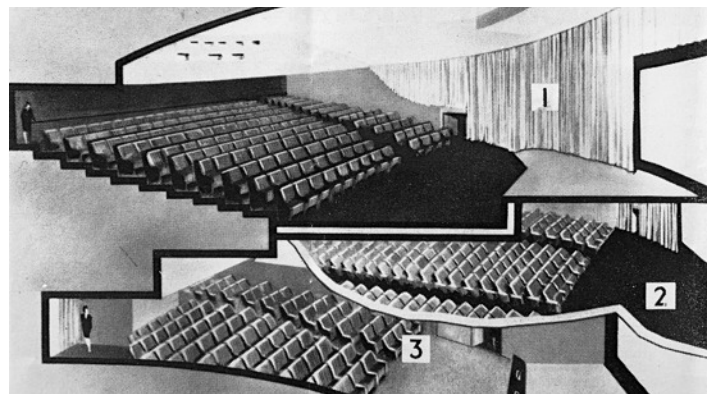


In order to give older halls a more modern feel the idea of the 'Luxury Lounge' was introduced in January 1967 at Lancaster. Unable to change the row spacing in the balcony due to the seats being mounted on steppings, the stalls seating was replaced with Dawson's Columbia model, widely spaced. Full redecoration was done and the stage end updated in a similar sweep-round curtaining fashion, as at Sheffield. Lighting was updated, with stage footlights replaced with floodlighting from the balcony front (first tried at ABC Londonderry in 1960) or dimmable fluorescents (debuted at Preston). 'Spider' chandeliers and a circular light fitting that was nicknamed the 'Mexican hat', a bronze-coloured fitting that not only threw light upwards but also had decorative vertical slits around the 'brim'. Toilets, foyers and frontages were remodelled to complete the transformation. The ABC Pinner became the first 'Luxury Lounge' conversion in the south of the country in September 1967.



New luxury lounge auditorium at the ABC Pinner. The rows of seats were usually staggered to improve sightlines. Half-width padded filler modules can be seen on the end of alternate rows on the aisle starting on the bottom left of the picture to maintain the straight line of the seating block. [6]

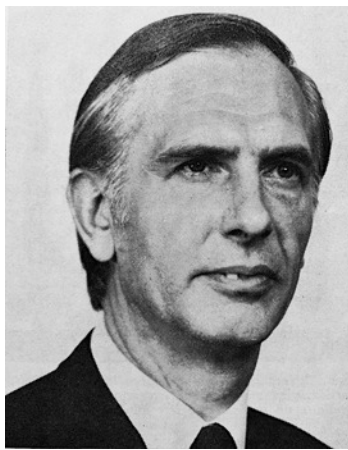
During 1968 it was becoming clear that even by updating cinemas and reducing seating capacities, most theatres were still too large. On one of his trips to the States, W Bill Cartledge had visited a multi-screened cinema and was impressed. Carving up an existing theatre into two or three smaller luxury auditoria seemed to be a better use of the space. The ABC Edinburgh became the first triple cinema for ABC in 1969. The auditoria had Columbia Mk1 seating and carpet design in colour coordinated schemes; red in screen ①, blue for screen ② and bronze for screen ③. The tripling of Edinburgh proved such a success that ABC's chairman and chief executive Bernard Delfont immediately called for up to 29 other theatres to be converted within 12 months!



Cut-away drawing of the ABC ①, ② & ③ Edinburgh showing how the three screens were fitted into the existing building. [7]

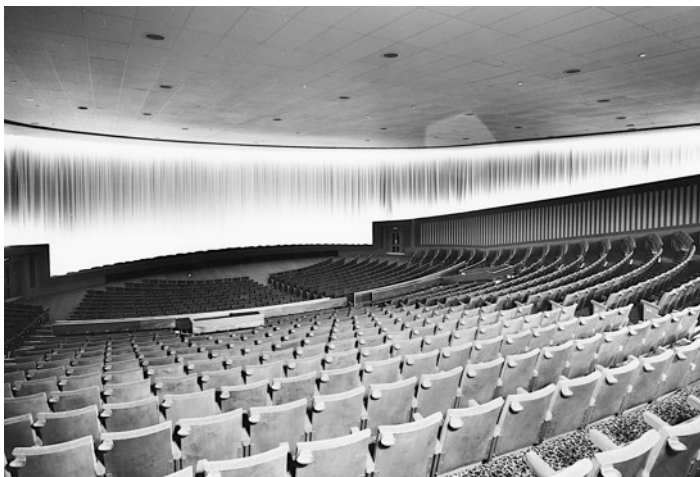


CJ Foster [8]



Alan Morgan [8]

In July 1970 Alan Morgan, who had started with ABC's architect's department in 1953, took over as chief architect following CJ Foster's retirement. Morgan's first solo project had been the ABC Newport in 1968. At Newport there was a departure from the norm in the auditorium, where screen curtains were not fitted, the screen being bathed in light between films. Morgan had worked on the bowling centres at Stanford Hill, Aberdeen & Harrow and the Hanley Ciné-Bowl, as well as the ABC Doncaster and ABC2 Glasgow.



ABC Doncaster auditorium with wrap round curtaining, Columbia Mk1 seats and the new design of carpet. The carpet came in three designs - bronze, red or dark blue main colour. [4]

Conversions continued, using Dawson's Columbia seats and colour matched carpet at Leeds, Bournemouth and all future standard conversions and new builds. Most of the cinemas retained these furnishings well into their Cannon Cinemas days, some closing without them ever being changed.

Photo Credits:

- [1] CTA Archive
- [2] Author
- [3] Ideal Kinema - September 1956
- [4] Ideal Kinema - April 1959
- [5] Kine Weekly - December 1966
- [6] ABC News - September 1967
- [7] Today's Cinema - December 1969
- [8] ABC News - August 1970



THE RINK / GAUMONT SMETHWICK

By David A Ellis

On 29 May 1909 the Smethwick roller skating rink, designed by Mr G Bowden and Son, opened to the public on Windmill Lane. Taking five weeks to construct, it had opened the previous day but was by invitation only. Later that year it closed for improvements, reopening on 4 September. The manager was a famous athlete at the time, Mr Chas B Wheelwright. In 1912 it was converted into a cinema called The Rink Picture House with 1,500 upholstered tip-up seats and advertised as the New Smethwick Picture House. This opened on Easter Monday 8 April. Programmes were screened nightly at 7 and 9. The opening films for the first half of the week included *Merely a Millionaire* and *How Mickey Dooley Survived the Coal Strike*. The building was 146ft long and 110ft wide. Films were screened twice nightly with matinées on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Sunday cinema in Smethwick was introduced on 7 September 1924.

It was run by Bosco's Ltd until 1920 when it was Mr Shapeero who was in charge. He bought it and several other halls including the Empire Dudley, the Electric Theatre Smethwick and the Picture House Villa Cross in a deal worth £140,000. Shapeero was the proprietor until Denman Picture Houses took over in 1928.

The cinema closed on Saturday 11 May 1929 and was demolished in the November, making way for a new much improved cinema, with building work commencing in the December. The new cinema was run by Gaumont British and the name Rink was retained. The architect was William T Benslyn. It opened on 7 July 1930 and the opening attraction, starting at 2:30, was a film called *Flight*. From the Thursday *Lone Star Ranger* was screened. The opening of the new building was performed by the Mayor, Councillor Samuel Smith JP. It was equipped with a Compton organ, played in the opening week by Leslie James.

Seating was provided for 1,950, 650 of them in the balcony. There was also a limited amount of standing room. The proscenium opening was 45ft wide and 30ft high, making it possible to show pictures up to a size of 40ft by 28ft. There were four pairs of doors leading to the entrance hall and there was a large crush hall. Colour decoration was carried out by Mr Frank Barnes, the company's scenic artist. The vaulting of the staircase and foyer were reminiscent of the Italian Renaissance. In 1949 it became a Gaumont and it carried on until 1 February 1964.



The Gaumont Smethwick as the Victoria Suite in May 2006

In 1956 friends and family of service people were invited to make sound recordings at the theatre to be sent to the forces in Cyprus. It was the idea of the manager, Mr JG Linz. Also in 1956 the cinema was one of several run by Rank that banned the showing of *Rock Around the Clock* on Sundays. A Rank spokesperson said, "Sunday night is regarded as the 'difficult' night in the cinema world." The last films were *Bitter Harvest* starring Janet Munro and *Tiger Bay* starring Hayley Mills. It became a Top Rank Bingo Club, later Mecca, which closed around 2005.

In 2000, the building was listed Grade II and is now a banqueting hall, known as the Victoria Suite. {20722}

A.B.C. PALACE		LANCASTER	
Sunday July 19th for 7 days.		Weekdays cont.1.55.	
Sun. cont. from 6.30.		L.C.P. 7.00	
Donald Sinden.		Barbara Murray	
OPERATION		BULLSHINE (u)	
2.15	5.35	8.55.	
Richard Ever.		JOHNNY ROCCO (u).	

DRIVE-IN THEATRE SNIPES

By Kevin Wheelan

Drive-in theatres, by their very nature, generated a unique range of 'snipes' † (announcements, advertisements and daters), which were shown as part of the film programme.

Safety was a priority and patrons were instructed on such topics as the correct way to leave the theatre without using headlights, which would spoil the show for remaining audience. Reminders were given to unhook the speaker and replace it on its stand before leaving to avoid shattering the car window. It was requested that a speaker torn from its stand be handed in at the pay desk or concession stand, no charge being made for the damage.

Being in the open air, drive-ins were at the mercy of the weather. In summer the heat could bring out clouds of mosquitoes. The remedy, available at the concession counter, was PiC, a spiral incense stick, the smoke from which was supposedly harmless to humans but fatal to flying insects. In winter, keeping the engine running for warmth was not an option, so cars were supplied with an electric in-car heater. During rain, rather than use windscreen wipers, patrons could buy a Drizzle Gard. Fixed to the windscreen and bonnet with rubber suckers, it kept the rain at bay but cannot have done much for the view of the screen.

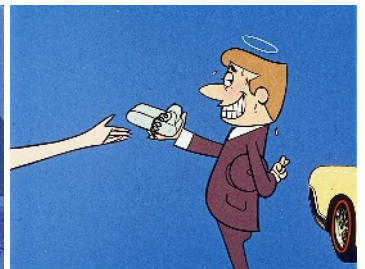
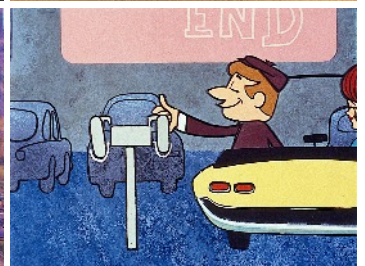
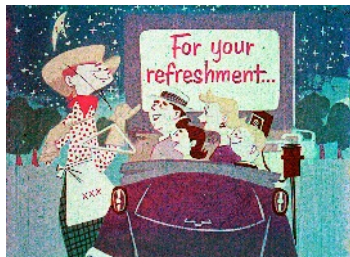
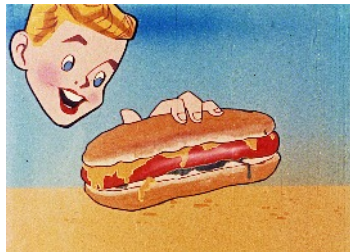
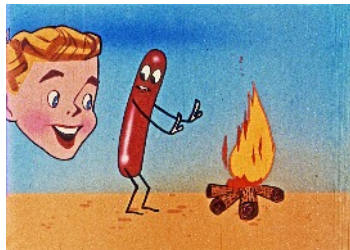
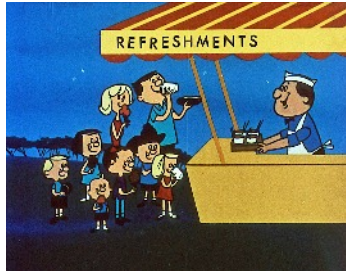
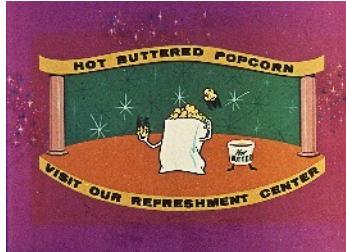
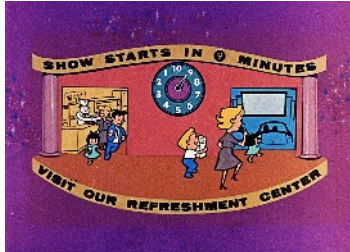
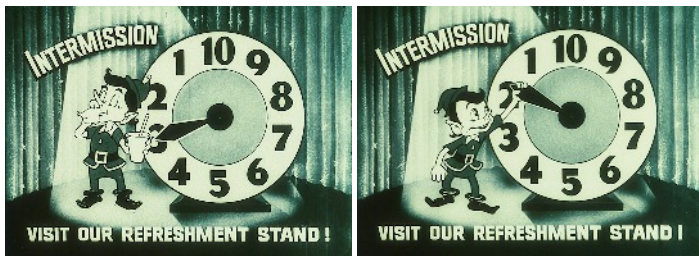
The concession stand, usually on a larger scale than in a conventional 'hardtop', often featured a snack bar, serving a much wider selection of food than just popcorn and soft drinks. In-car service was also available in some drive-ins.

During the intermission it was common practice to project a count-down 'clock' on the screen showing how many minutes were left until the programme recommenced. Clocks could be purchased ready made with adverts between the minute markers, or the exhibitor could buy 'shells' – just the minute markers and make up his own. One well known clock featured various items of confectionery performing circus acts, while another showed an elf munching his way through the goodies available at the concession stand and moving the clock hand as each minute passed.

Last but not least, were the 'daters' placed before the trailers, advising when forthcoming films were to be shown and often featuring a drive-in theatre background.

Illustrations are frame enlargements from the author's 35mm collection.





† [Wikipedia](#): A snipe in the motion picture exhibition business refers to a few things: Any material before the feature presentation other than a trailer; "Welcome to our theater," courtesy trailers ("no smoking, littering, talking"), promotions for the snackbar and "daters", that announce the date for an upcoming show, are the most common kinds of snipes.

NEWSREEL

The items in this section are taken mainly from press cuttings from local newspapers. Although their factual accuracy has been checked by Allen Eyles, there may be minor errors in reporting dates or other detail.

Allen has also added comments, where indicated.

Photos by Harry Rigby within entry, except where stated.

A number in curly brackets {nnnnn} is the reference for the Cinema Treasures website. Go to: [\[cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn\]](http://cinematreasures.org/theaters/nnnnn)

ALNWICK (Northumberland)



The Playhouse has reopened after being closed since autumn 2018 for a £2.5m refurbishment. It first opened in December 1925. The auditorium is now on the first floor. There is a 3¾ minute time-lapse video of the get-out process at youtu.be/L51M-nlf7ho.

www.alnwickplayhouse.co.uk {47495}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken March 2016

ASHFORD (Kent)

The long-promised extension to the twelve-screen Cineworld is set to open in March next year. It will feature both IMAX and 4DX screens. Ten of the existing screens have already been refurbished, along with the foyer. {24116}

Kent Online – 16 September, 1 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock

BASILDON (Essex)

Construction of the new ten-screen Empire has been completed and is being fitted out ready to open in February next year. It will have the largest screen in Essex and the second largest after Leicester Square. Basildon already has a sixteen-screen Cineworld.

Essex Live – 19 October

BLACKPOOL (Lancs)

A ground breaking ceremony has been held to mark the start of the contract for redevelopment of the Tower Street car park, which includes a nine-screen cinema. The first phase of the project will be completed by winter 2022 but no date has been given for the eventual opening.

Lancashire Live – 27 September

BOLTON (Greater Manchester)

The Council could use money from the government's 'Town Fund' to create a pocket park on the site of the former Odeon. It is hoped this new space would be used as a 'day-to-day space' for town centre workers, students and visitors, a venue for the food and drink festival and "one-off events such as outdoor film shows". The Odeon opened in August 1937 and films ceased in January 1983. It became a bingo hall, which closed in November 2007. The building was demolished in February 2007. {18619}

Bolton News – 14 September; sent in by Brian Hall

BOURNEMOUTH

Approval has been given in principle for 670m² of lower and mid-ground level commercial units, 65 apartments and 61 parking spaces at the site of the former ABC. The consent allows for "substantial demolition" of the site. However, the report goes on to say that four storeys are to be added on top of the existing building and the façade will be retained. Before more progress is made, a detailed planning consent will have to be drawn up and approved. Libra Homes bought the ABC and Odeon sites in 2017 for a reported £6.15m but saw its first applications to develop them rejected.

Daily Echo, Bournemouth – 28 August; sent in by John Forster

BRANDON (Suffolk)

The former Avenue has been demolished. It opened in 1934 and had become a full-time bingo club by the mid-1970s. This had closed by 2007 and the building had been empty since. See photo p15 last Bulletin. {27169}

Sent in by Darron Keeling & Ken Roe

BRIGHTON

The Grade II listed Duke of York's cinema celebrated its 111th anniversary on 22 September. It hosted a special screening of *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*. {2433}

The Argus, Brighton – 23 September

BRISTOL



The former Broadway in Filwood Park is set to be demolished and housing built on the site; planning permission for the demolition was granted in 2019. It opened in 1938 with 1,163 seats and was refurbished in 1961. Cinema use ended in 1971 and it became a full-time bingo club, which had closed by 1994. The cinema was designed by Dennis Hurford and FGW Chamberlain in a late art deco style that matched the shopping parade next to it and it was supported by a £7,000 loan from the Council. However, in return for the money, the cinema had to have a separate doorway at the back, with its own paybox, intended for working class people to use. {47281}

Bristol Live – 25 August; photo taken March 2006

The former St George's Hall / Granada in Redfield closed as a Wetherspoon's pub on 19 September. A developer wants to buy the site with a view to building flats. However more than 2,000 people have signed a petition to save it. The venue opened in 1912 and was extended in 1927. It became the Granada in July 1935 and films ceased in December 1961. It became a bingo club, which continued for about 30 years. The narrow frontage led to a long foyer with a 767-seat auditorium at right angles behind it. The Wetherspoons pub only used the foyer area; the auditorium was used for storage and is said to be largely intact with a balcony holding about 130 seats. See Casework p6. {27949}

Bristol Post – 15 September; photo on p6



Planning permission has been granted to demolish most of Hengrove Leisure Park and build new homes. The site includes a fourteen-screen 2,654-seat Cineworld, which opened in December 1997. {24267}

Bristol Post – 23 September; photo taken March 2006

BURY ST EDMUNDS (Suffolk)

The Abbeygate has embarked on the final stage of refurbishment, bringing much-needed toilets to the foyer. The cinema is starting a three-month fundraising drive to raise money for the next part of the development, with building work expected to cost around £40,000. {24294}

East Anglian Daily Times – 18 September

CANTERBURY (Kent)



The new Marlowe Theatre reached its 10th birthday on 4 October. It replaced the previous theatre of the same name, which was converted from the former Odeon, which opened in August 1933. Films ceased in October 1981 and the building was extensively altered for theatre use, opening in July 1984. It was demolished in 2009.

Kent Online – 4 October; photo taken September 2021

CHELTENHAM (Glos)

The new Tivoli cinema opened in Regent Arcade on 24 September. It has four screens with a total capacity of 358 (74, 83, 94 & 73) all with sofa seating and a 32-seat Screening Room, which can be hired out for private events & parties. There is a café & licensed bar. There are some photos on the newspapers' websites at tinyurl.com/3pax4xn9 and tinyurl.com/4n8saj69. {66000}

SoGlos – 23 October; Gloucestershire Live – 24 September; sent in by Anthony Wills

CUMBERNAULD (Lanark)

The Lanternhouse officially opened on 2 October. It will host theatre, cinema, music, comedy, dance and a variety of community arts projects.

The National – 26 September

DERBY

Plans to return the Grade II listed Hippodrome to a working theatre have been shelved in favour of it becoming a live music venue, according to a new report from consultants. It is estimated that construction costs would be around £6.5 million and a total project cost of £8 million, excluding site acquisition. The 1914 theatre was maliciously damaged in 2008. {14683}

Derbyshire Live – 28 September; The Stage – 14 October; sent in by R David Simpson

DUMBARTON



Residents have launched a drive to reopen the former Rialto, which most recently operated as the Carlton bingo hall and is lying empty after closing down in August last year. It opened in 1914 with 1,245 seats and was rebuilt in 1981 with bingo downstairs and two small cinemas upstairs. The cinemas closed in 1989 and a brief reopening in 1993 was unsuccessful. {34870}

Daily Record – 9 September; photo taken September 2008

GLASGOW (Govan)

A developer has appealed after his bid to revamp the B-listed Lyceum was rejected – see p 23 last Bulletin. Under the plans, ground floor space would be turned into a concert hall with a separate entrance and capacity for 1,000 people standing, 800 sitting and 700 around tables. A 90-seat restaurant would be situated on the ground floor, also with a separate entrance, plus a 30-seat cafeteria and a first-floor cinema with nearly 500 seats. The applicant says he could address the issues raised by the Council's rejection of the proposal and listed building application. The notice issued by planners said there were various "inappropriate alterations". These included the loss of original entrance gates and the formation of new doors flush with the building line; removal of existing doors and stairs, the introduction of a full-height masonry partition in the foyer and addition of roller shutters on the east elevation. {15565}

Scottish Construction Now – 21 September

HAILSHAM (East Sussex)



The Grade II listed Pavilion celebrates its 100th birthday on 28 November. The architect was Henry W Coussens from Hastings and the cinema became notable for being the first of the Shipman and King circuit. The opening film starred Charlie Chaplin in *The Kid*. The cinema closed in 1965 but reopened as a bingo club in 1967 and this continued until 1985, when the building was left empty and neglected. June Bourne, a former Mayor in the town, was successful in bringing the community together for years of fundraising and, with the aid of some grants, the cinema was beautifully restored and reopened in 2000. The Pavilion is operated as a charity with the loyal support of a large number of volunteers providing a popular asset in this rapidly expanding town. {22446}

Sent in and photo [February 2008] by Colin & Margaret Hide; exterior photo on front cover

HARPENDEN (Herts)

A new culture centre has been named after the late comedian Eric Morecambe. The Eric Morecambe Centre includes a 511-seat theatre. Eric lived in the town at the height of his fame in a comedy double act with Ernie Wise, until his death in 1984. The centre's website includes a reference to films but your editor has been unable to find details of any films showing.

BBC News Website – 17 October; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

HULL (East Yorks)

The nine-screen Cineworld reopened on 29 September after a refurbishment that began in June. It opened as the UGC in May 2000 and was rebranded Cineworld in November 2005. It boasts a Superscreen, the circuit's 18th in the UK, with 395 seats, 4k laser projection and Dolby Atmos sound. There is also a 4DX screen, the circuit's 33rd in the UK and a 270° ScreenX, the 19th installation. The updated venue also features refurbished standard screens with new seats, premium seating and updates to the foyer and concession stands. {24772}

Hull Daily Mail – 17 September; photo on front cover

IPSWICH (Suffolk)

The Hope Church has started holding services in the former five-screen Odeon, which closed in August 2005. The two upstairs screens have been knocked together to form a large auditorium for the Church's main services. The downstairs is pretty much as it was when a cinema. The newspaper website has some photos of the interior at tinyurl.com/s2bxaha8. {13679}

East Anglian Daily Times – 22, 27 September; Ipswich Star – 26 September; sent in by Terry Hanstock

LONDON (Barbican)

The Grade II listed Barbican Centre is planning a £150m transformation. The building is home to a 288-seat cinema, two art galleries, a concert hall and several theatres. The brutalist building opened in 1982; there were originally two further screens but these closed in 2012. Since then, two additional screens have been opened in a nearby building. {20002}

Evening Standard – 8 September; The Stage – 16 September; sent in by R David Simpson

LONDON (Belsize Park)

The Everyman has reopened after a refurbishment. {15081}

Ham & High – 30 September

LONDON (Camden)

The KOKO nightclub in the Grade II listed former Camden Theatre has announced it will reopen next spring. It has been closed since March 2019 and suffered a fire in January 2020. The main theatre space is being fully restored. There will be additional performance spaces and the usual bars and restaurants. {14486}

Evening Standard – 21 October; sent in by Ray Dolling & Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Finchley Road)

Proposals for the O2 Centre site on Finchley Road have been altered to include space for a gym, cinema and community garden following consultation with residents.

Ham & High – 6 October

LONDON (Finsbury Park)

The new seven-screen Picture House opened in City North Place on 23 September. Each screen has 4k laser projection. This is the first cinema in the area since the Astoria closed in 1971. {65985}

Ham & High – 19 August; Islington Tribune – 29 September; sent in by Jeremy Buck & Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Golders Green)



The Australian based Hillsong Church has bought the Grade II listed Hippodrome for £5.25m. A plan to turn it into a mosque was rejected after opposition from local residents. The theatre opened in December 1913 and held its final stage show in February 1968. It was built equipped with a projection box, that enabled occasional film performances to be held. For many years it was leased by the BBC and hosted *Friday Night is Music Night*. {29969}

The Guardian – 21 October; sent in by Gary Donaldson; photo taken April 2006

LONDON (Hoxton)

The three-screen Curzon opened on 4 June. There is a picture of the frontage on the cover of Bulletin 55/1 (Jan/Feb 2021). The screens seat 108, 60 and 48. {65238}

Sent in by Jeremy Buck & Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Piccadilly)

The Grade II listed BAFTA building at 195 Piccadilly has had a multi-million-pound refurbishment. The jewel in the crown is the 227-seat Princess Anne Theatre, one of the most technologically advanced screening facilities in the world. It features Dolby Vision projectors and Dolby Atmos sound, luxurious armchair style seating and ample leg room. There is also the 200-seat Ray Dolby room, with HD projection facilities. A 35-page brochure can be downloaded as a pdf from tinyurl.com/c3j4a4se.

BAFTA Press Release; sent in by John West

LONDON (Walthamstow)

Preparatory works, including foundation strengthening, have now been completed at the Grade II* listed former Granada/EMD. The £25.6m project will include reshaping the seating and stage to allow live performances with improved sightlines, while original features including the ziggurat ceiling and the building's frontage will be restored. The 950-seat venue is expected to reopen in 2023. {9397}

The Construction Index – 29 September

LONDON (Waterloo)

Two years after Lambeth Council and TfL spent £500,000 exploring proposals to redevelop the BFI IMAX cinema site at Waterloo, the Council is set to allocate a further £150,000 for a feasibility study for an 'office-led' scheme. The BFI has a long lease (some 128 years unexpired) of the IMAX site, which accommodates the IMAX cinema; Lambeth Council owns the freehold interest of the 'IMAX island'. Two years ago the Twentieth Century Society placed the IMAX cinema on its list of the top ten modern buildings at risk of demolition. {19982}

london se1 community website – 1 September

LONDON (West End)

The new two-screen Odeon Luxe West End opened on 9 September. It is housed in the basement of a hotel on the site of the former Leicester Square Theatre / Odeon West End. The larger screen has 168 seats and the smaller one 70. The CTA visited on 29 September – see report on p8. {65918}

The Scottish Sun – 20 August

LONGRIDGE (Lancs)



The 200-seat Palace will not reopen under its current management, having been closed since early 2021 when the owners decided it was not financially viable. It has been put on the market for offers over £400,000. It could either continue as a cinema or be used for other purposes. {6903}

Clitheroe Advertiser – 9 September; Lancashire Evening Post – 20 September; sent in by Philip Crompton & Joseph Roberts; photo taken September 2003

LUDLOW (Shropshire)



The Assembly Rooms has reopened after three years and a £3.5m refurbishment. It has a 300-seat raked auditorium on the first floor. The building was first used as a cinema in the early 1900s and closed in the mid-1970s. It was renovated and opened as the Assembly Rooms arts centre in May 1993. {24988}

Shropshire Star – 1 October; photo taken April 2010

LUTON (Beds)

I noticed on the Rightmove website that the apartments in the remains of the Ritz Cinema are being advertised for sale so this morning I walked round to have a look at the site. I don't think anyone will be moving into the apartments any time soon by the look of the building site! The prices advertised are: 1-bedroom apartments £190,000 and £230,000; 2-bedroom apartments £270,000; penthouse £385,000! I liked the name planned for the building *The Picture House* – it sounds a bit classy for Luton though! {6247}

Sent in by Margaret Burgoine

MANCHESTER (Chorlton-cum-Hardy)



The former **Palace** is to be demolished to make way for flats. The cinema opened in May 1914 with 1,200 seats. Films ceased in December 1957 and it was converted into a supermarket; the decorative frontage was removed. It closed as a Co-op in 2008. {33844}

Manchester Evening News – 28 September; sent in by Terry Rourke; photo taken August 2005

MANCHESTER (Hulme)

Campaigners fighting to save the deteriorating Grade II listed Hippodrome before it becomes “derelict beyond repair” have made a big step forward as the building has been listed as an asset of community value by Manchester City Council. The building has been on the Theatres Trust ‘at risk’ register since it was started in 2006. {55576}

The Stage – 30 September; sent in by R David Simpson

MARLBOROUGH (Wilts)

The new **Parade** cinema opened on 18 September. It is housed in a former chapel of 1817; conversion began a year ago – see p19 Bulletin 54/5. It has 70 seats in the stalls and 36 in the balcony with laser projection, surround sound and comfortable armchair seats. theparadecinema.com {65577}

Gazette & Herald – 26 August

MARLOW (Bucks)

Revised plans have been submitted for a new **Everyman** cinema. The original plans, approved in July 2020, were for a two-screen cinema in the former Steamer Trading shop. It is not stated how the new plans differ.

Bucks Free Press – 4 October

MILTON KEYNES

A crowdfunding campaign has been launched to raise £10m to save **The Point**, which included the UK's first multiplex, from being converted into housing. It is understood the asking price is between £6.5m and £7m. Under the plans it would continue to accommodate important local charities while the bingo hall area will be turned into a banqueting suite for community use. The old cinema auditoria will be used for music concerts, shows, gaming and other private events. The venue opened in November 1985. thepointmk.com {25085}

MK Citizen – 25 August; BBC News website – 26 August; The i – 27 August; sent in by John Forster, R David Simpson & Matt Smith

MONTROSE (Angus)

The new £3.5m three-screen 400-seat **Playhouse** community cinema officially opened on 8 October. It is housed in a former swimming pool, which was bought from the Council for £1 in September 2017. The screens seat 150, 150 and 100. Their website montroseplayhouse.co.uk contains a wealth of information and photos. {66039}

Dundee Courier – 24 September; Sunday Post – 10 October; sent in by David Kay & Tom Laughlan

MORECAMBE (Lancs)



The Grade II* listed **Winter Gardens** hosted a concert by the Leeds Male Voice Choir on 9 October. The proceeds helped support the restoration work on the building. See also letters p26. {4537}

Sent in by Rob Butler; photo taken from the 'gods' on the CTA visit June 2008

NEWPORT (South Wales)



Work is currently being undertaken to restore the Grade II listed former **Odeon**, now known as the **Neon**. The disabled toilets are being refurbished and discussions to add disabled parking, CCTV, and lighting to the disused land behind the building are being pursued. A VIP area has been introduced downstairs where a big screen and projectors are being reinstated to reintroduce cinema nights. The balcony has a seating area, which will remain, with work underway to add an upstairs bar, install booths, and add a VIP area to the balcony. Broadcasting systems are also being installed to allow live streaming of events and to adapt for Internet audiences. The building opened in March 1938 and films ceased in May 1981, still as a single-screen. It has had various uses since. {3420}

South Wales Argus – 20 September; photo taken June 2013 when we went to a model railway exhibition held there.

PETERBOROUGH (Cambs)

Construction is progressing on the new ten-screen **Empire** being built on top of the **Queensgate** shopping centre. A crane has been lifting the steel framework onto the roof. The operator is expected to take possession of the building before Christmas.

Evening Telegraph, Peterborough – 7 October

PETWORTH (West Sussex)

The **Leconfield Hall** is to show films after a £250,000 redevelopment project. A digital projector and surround sound system have been installed. The upstairs auditorium can seat 152 on tiered seating. The opening film was James Bond *No Time to Die*.

Chichester Observer – 23 September

PRESCOT (Merseyside)

The former **Palace** cinema has been listed at Grade II. The cinema opened in 1912 behind a row of existing houses. It ceased showing films in the 1950s and from the 1990s until 2016 was occupied by a church. The building has now been acquired by Knowsley Council and it is hoped will become a community theatre and cinema. {51658}

Sent in by Jeremy Buck

RAMSBOTTOM (Lancs)

The Grade II listed former Co-op Hall has been awarded a grant of £19,000. The money will be used by Ramsbottom Co-op Hall Heritage Trust to commission a market appraisal and a building valuation survey of the 800-seat venue. The building, which dates from 1876, is on the Theatres Trust 'at risk' register; much of the interior remains.

Bury Times – 29 January, 17 February, 26 May; sent in by Philip Crompton

RINGWOOD (Hants)



A public consultation has been held over plans to convert the former Regal into flats. The façade would be retained. A campaign to save the building came to naught. {28134}

Southern Daily Echo – 3, 9, 10 September; photo taken March 2009;
sent in by Margaret Burgoine, John Forster & Ian Patterson;

SALISBURY (Wilts)



The Odeon celebrated its 90th birthday on 7 September. It was completed within 18 months and opened on that date in 1931. The *Salisbury Times* estimated that nearly 5,000 people visited the theatre during the day and it was formally declared open by the Countess of Pembroke in the afternoon. The auditorium had a Tudor theme to tie in with the entrance, which is through the Grade I listed 15th Century 'Ye Hall of John Halle'. It currently has five screens and is Grade II listed. {22735}

Salisbury Journal – 7 September; photo taken March 2009

SHEFFIELD (Attercliffe)

Planning permission has been granted for the Grade II listed former Adelphi to become an educational facility. Details and a photo were printed on p26 of the last Bulletin. {22683}

Insider Media – 19 October; *The Star* – 22 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock

SLEAFORD (Lincs)

Kesteven District Council says that plans for a £4m cinema are still on hold. The planned venue would have three screens with 300 seats. An operator was being sought.

Sleaford Standard – 8 September

SOUTHPORT (Merseyside)



The former Garrick was due to go to auction on 2 November with a guide price of £700,000-£750,000 but was sold prior for an undisclosed amount. The auctioneers' website at tinyurl.com/3yuw5xny contains a link where you can download the full particulars. {22651}

Sent in by Ray Duns; photo taken June 2021

STOCKTON-ON-TEES



Documents lodged with the planning departments at Middlesbrough and Stockton Councils outline proposals to create an industrial development at Teesside Park. The site is currently home to a fourteen-screen Showcase, which would be demolished, although there is no suggestion of imminent closure. Showcase Cinemas said it has recently completed a multi-million-pound refurbishment at the cinema and remains fully committed to the area. The cinema has a 200ft long marquee, said to be the longest in the world. {25392}

Teesside Live – 23, 24 August; photo taken May 2006

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON (Warks)

The site of the former Picture House is to become a temporary car park, although the owner insists it will become a hotel in the long term. The venue opened in May 1997 and was closed and demolished in 2020. {21199}

Stratford-upon-Avon Herald – 19 August

SUTTON COLDFIELD (West Midlands)



The Grade II listed four-screen Empire (ex Odeon) has been closed since the second lockdown and will remain closed for at least the next nine months for an extensive refurbishment. It is thought part of the car park may be used for a nursing home. On p7 of Bulletin 23/4 (July/August 1989) plans were announced by Odeon to add two screens at the rear but this never proceeded as far as obtaining planning permission. {15012}

Sunday Mercury, Birmingham – 19 September;
additional material from Tim McCullen; photo taken April 2007

TENTERDEN (Kent)

The team behind proposals for a new cinema in the town say it has identified a potential new site – Highbury Hall, situated between Tesco and the High Street. The Youth Club that uses these premises is set to move to a new home. The original plans for a £2.6m cinema in the Pebbles building was derailed amid spiraling costs.

Kent Online – 24 August

THIRSK (North Yorks)

The Ritz is used in Channel 5's new series of *All Creatures Great and Small*. The surrounding shops and the interior of the cinema were transformed to look more in keeping with the 1938 period, when Alf Wight himself would have visited. {3372}

Yorkshire Post – 15 October; sent in by Terry Hanstock

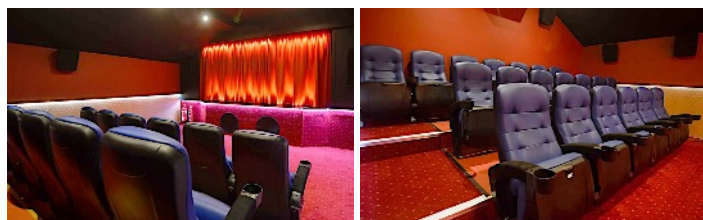
WEST BROMWICH (Sandwell)



The former King's Cinema is to be demolished and replaced with a '15-storey vertical forest clad with bushes and trees'. The cinema was opened in March 1974 and was the first purpose-built three-screen cinema in the UK. It was a replacement for the old King's Cinema, which opened in 1914 and closed in 1973. The new cinema closed in September 2002 and the ground floor was later converted to retail space. {47864}

Birmingham Mail – 2 September; photo taken April 2007

WOODHALL SPA (Lincs)



The Kinema in the Woods has opened a fourth screen. It seats 21 and has JBL Dolby sound with laser projection. {6373}

Sent in & photos by Dave Gilks

WORTHING (West Sussex)

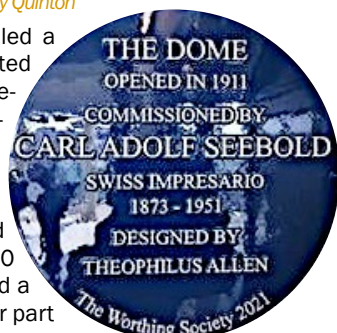
The cinema at the Connaught Theatre has been brought up to date with new equipment. Both screens are now capable of Dolby 7.1 digital audio and have 4k laser projectors. {23914}

Worthing Herald – 12 August; sent in by Barry Quinton

The Mayor of Worthing has unveiled a blue plaque at the Grade II* listed Dome to commemorate Carl Seebold, who commissioned the building of the cinema. It opened in April 1911 with 879 seats and underwent a full Lottery-funded restoration, closing in June 2005 and reopening in July 2007 with 580 seats in the original auditorium and a second 118-seat cinema in another part of the building. {4011}

Worthing Herald – 24, 30 September; sent in by Terry Hanstock & Barry Quinton

AE writes: The Dome opened in 1911 as the Coronation Hall for roller skating, concerts, etc and was turned into a cinema in 1921.



REWINDING BACK TO THE 1950S

Sent in by David A Ellis

ABC GIFT TO NAVY

Kinema equipment to the value of more than £3,000 has been presented by ABC to the Royal Navy Auxiliary Services at Stretton, Warrington. It includes two projectors and sound gear that was previously in use at the Ritz but has become obsolete. The presentation was made on behalf of ABC by the Mayor of Warrington. It was installed free of charge by G Hamilton (chief projectionist at the Ritz), N Lowe-Williams and B Cash.

Kine Weekly – 20 May 1954

Note: These were Simplex machines; Westars had replaced them and they remained until the cinema closed.

RANK TO CLOSE 40 SMALL CINEMAS

Approximately 40 small Odeon and Gaumont theatres are to be closed by the Rank Organisation before the end of October, a statement issued from the organisation offices in London said last night. A spokesman for the organisation stated that the first 26 of the 40 cinemas would probably shut down by the end of September. Among them are: Barnsley Princess; Birkenhead Super; Burton-on-Trent Gaumont; Chester Majestic; Crewe Palace; Dudley Criterion; Gateshead Scala; Halifax Electric; Hanley Empire; Leeds Pavilion; Liverpool Grand (Sefton Park), Beresford and Savoy; Mansfield Rock; New Brighton Trocadero; Nottingham Grand and Smethwick Electric. The spokesman added: "These are all small cinemas. We intend to absorb all managerial and technical staff elsewhere in the organisation and we hope it will be possible to do this with the majority of other employees affected."

The organisation's statement said that the decision to close the cinemas "has been made after a very careful review of the situation, having regard to the absence of any entertainment tax relief in the last budget. For a number of years the trading results at these theatres have been unsatisfactory because of the steep rise in operating costs and the high incidence of entertainments tax. But the Rank Organisation has continued operation in the hope of some relief. It has not been forthcoming and the closures are a logical consequence. The step is being taken with great reluctance and with a full awareness of all the consequences, including the loss to local film-goers and the British film industry."

In his annual statement last October, Mr Rank referred to the "unreasonable burden" of entertainment tax and said, "It is in the national interest as well as that of this industry that this problem receives sympathetic consideration by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, particularly in view of the pending increase in competition from sponsored television. It could follow that, unless the problem is tackled in time, the net result will be a material loss of revenue to the Exchequer."

Birmingham Post – 1 September 1956

CINEMAS BAN THEM SMOKING

Smoking will be banned on Mondays and Fridays from next week in the Classic cinemas at Tooting and Croydon. If the ban is a success, then it will be extended to all 27 cinemas owned by Capital and Provincial News Theatres Ltd. There will be an interval during the programme. "I think many people, following the lung cancer scare, may have been put off the cinema because of their dislike for breathing in the smoke," said Mr Eric Rhodes, general manager of the company, last night.

Daily Herald – 2 August 1957

Editor's Note: See Internet Corner p30 last Bulletin or [fb.watch/8Vc107k82L](https://www.facebook.com/watch/8Vc107k82L) for a 1957 BBC Newsreel covering the topic.

CINEMAS LIFT BAN ON SMOKES

For six months a cinema company banned smoking in its cinemas on two days a week. Today the ban comes off because it kept away the customers. Now they may puff away again on Mondays and Fridays in the Classic Cinemas at Tooting, Croydon and Eastbourne. Mr Eric Rhodes, director of Capital and Provincial News Theatres, said: "It started off quite well but the novelty wore off. Many people came to the box office, saw the notice and went off to another cinema. Attendances on Mondays and Fridays went down thirty per cent." In a booklet on cancer this week the British Medical Association urged more cinemas to ban smoking.

Daily Herald – 1 January 1958

CINEMA BUSINESS

CINEWORLD

Cineworld has agreed to pay nearly £190m to investors who claim they were underpaid during the firm's takeover of Regal Entertainment. The chain bought its US rival for £2.6bn or \$23 a share in 2016, expanding its reach into North America and adding 561 cinemas to its business. Shares in Cineworld soared as the industry received a James Bond bounce. The stock rose 8.5% or 11.88p to 80.02p, its highest since July.

Daily Express, Daily Mail – 11, 28 September;
sent in by Margaret Burgoine, Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton

London's Trocadero Centre in Piccadilly Circus has won a high court battle against Cineworld and Picturehouse Cinemas over unpaid rent in the region of £2.8m relating to the flagship venue Picturehouse Central. The companies argued they were not liable for rent for the time when the premises could not legally be used due to Covid-19 restrictions. The court heard that between closing in the first lockdown in March 2020 and May 2021, the cinema was only open for 71 days with takings of about £247,000. This compared with takings of £8.92m for the same period pre-pandemic. The judge said there was no good commercial reason why the loss should be borne by the landlord.

CityAM.com – 29 September; sent in by R David Simpson

BOND IS BACK

More than three quarters of 18–24-year-olds say they will definitely watch the new James Bond film *No Time to Die*. However, they are less likely to venture out to the cinema to do so, with 72% planning to watch it at home or on demand. Meanwhile, viewers aged 35–54 are most likely to watch it on the big screen. More than half of men say that the Bond movie will be their first trip back to the cinema, compared with 42% of women.

Lynn News – 24 September

PREMIUM BOND

It looks as if James Bond has been given a licence to make a killing as fans will have to pay more to see then new 007 movie at cinemas than other films. A peak ticket in Leicester Square for *No Time to Die* cost £17.50, compared with £15.50 for *Shang-Chi* at the same cinema. At the Odeon in Birmingham the difference is £2.50. The most expensive ticket appears to be at London's BFI IMAX where fans can look to pay £27.50 in peak times and £14 on a weekday morning. The Bond film took an estimated £4.5m–£5m in its first 24 hours at the UK box office, around 13% higher than 2015's *Spectre* but 26% below 2012's *Skyfall*. The long-awaited film broke the record for the widest theatrical release of all time in Britain, with 772 cinemas showing it – 25 more than the previous record *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* in 2019.

Southern Daily Echo – 2 October; sent in by Ian Patterson & Barry Quinton

ADMISSIONS

The total UK and Ireland box-office for 2020 fell to £323m, which was 76% down on 2019. Only 441 movies were released in 2020, less than half of the previous year, as cinemas either reduced their opening hours or shut down completely.

Sunday Times – 15 August; Lynn News – 24 September; sent in by Barry Quinton

NO DRAMA AT THEATRE RULES

The boss of the UK's biggest theatre, the A-listed Edinburgh Playhouse, said he has received "surprisingly little" negative feedback about the new Covid-19 rules for the 2,950-seat venue. "Our surveys suggest almost 70% of our audience are happy with what we're doing and only 10% are unhappy, with the rest ambivalent."

Daily Record – 16 September; sent in by Tom Laughlan

WARNER MAY BE COMING

Warner Bros is looking to establish a HQ in Glasgow, ahead of shooting an entire movie there. This follows the success earlier this year shooting the new *Indiana Jones* and *Batman* films on location in the City.

The Scottish Sun, Daily Record – 1 October; sent in by Tom Laughlan

CASINO SUES OVER £10M DEBT

A casino featured in the James Bond film *Dr No* has taken a Chinese tycoon to court to recover £10m after cheques he cashed bounced. Yu Songbo spent £19m on gambling chips in just five days in 2018 at the exclusive Les Ambassadeurs Club in London's Park Lane. The casino also featured in the Beatles' film *A Hard Day's Night*.

Daily Mail – 25 August; sent in by Barry Quinton

MISCELLANY

FAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN

James Bond fanatic Luke Arnold is so obsessed with 007 he's seen the new film *No Time to Die* five times already. He has spent £100,000 on events and memorabilia, which is in a display cabinet in his bedroom. In his collection are three limited edition watches and every pair of sunglasses Daniel Craig has worn in his four outings as Bond. Even his mobile number and email address end in 007!

The Sun – 3 October; sent in by Richard Hawkins

SOMALIAN CINEMA RETURNS

Somalis have been able to return to the cinema for the first time in three decades. The National Theatre in Mogadishu, which warlords used as a base in 1991 and was seized by Islamist militants in 1991, who banned public entertainment in 2006, screened a double bill of horror film *Hoos* and 'comedy' *Date from Hell*.

Metro – 24 September; sent in by Tom Laughlan

CARRY ON SELLING



A collection of more than 20 quad film posters from the *Carry On* series has fetched almost £10,000 at auction. The 1963 *Carry On Cabby* poster fetched £1,700 and the 1965 *Carry On Cowboy* one sold for £1,400.

Daily Mirror – 1 September; Daily Record – 2 September;
sent in by Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton

MOVIE PHONE BOX SAVED

A phone box in Pennan, Aberdeenshire, has been saved from being taken out of service. It featured in the film *Local Hero* (1983) which featured calls being made to the USA from the kiosk. BT said that if the Council decided there was a need for the payphone, it would remain in service.

Daily Mirror – 13 September; sent in by Barry Quinton

CINEMAS FIRST

The rest of Disney's 2021 films will be shown in cinemas before being available for streaming. During the pandemic, its major films were released on-line at the same time as in theatres. The decision comes after actress Scarlett Johansson sued Disney for not releasing *Black Widow* exclusively in cinemas.

Sunday Mirror – 12 September; sent in by Barry Quinton

MORECAMBE VETERAN

Douglas MacGregor, who managed several cinemas in Morecambe, has died just a few days before his 101st birthday. He was affectionately known as Uncle Mac to the 400 youngsters who attended children's matinées every Saturday afternoon at the Empire Cinema, where he was manager from the late 1960s until it closed in August 1985. Prior to that he had also worked at other cinemas in the resort, including the Odeon, Plaza, Palladium, Royalty and Arcadian.

Lancaster Guardian – 15 October; sent in by Philip Crompton

ALLIGATOR SCULPTURE PAYS TRIBUTE

Local MP Theresa May and the granddaughter of actress Diana Dors have unveiled a new life-size sculpture of an alligator in Maidenhead. The piece of public art pays tribute to the film *An Alligator Named Daisy*, which starred Diana Dors in the title role. She was living close to Maidenhead at the time.

Maidenhead Advertiser – 30 September; sent in by R David Simpson

LETTERS

CORRECTIONS

I must correct Tim McCullen on three Welsh names in his list of cinema names as they appear in the September/ October Bulletin. Brynammon (correct spelling Brynamman), Caerphilly and Cwmillgm-fell (correct spelling Cwmlllynfell) are all names of places in South Wales, not names of cinemas. He could have included the name of the cinema in Brynamman which is the **Public Hall**. I would like to add three names of Welsh cinemas to the list, two of which were taken from the name of the proprietor, namely the Rex Aberdare, after Rex Willis, son of the proprietor, who represented Wales at rugby in the 1950s and the Maxime Blackwood and Sketty (Swansea) after the owner of the chain, Maxwell Corne. Also, an unusual name for a cinema was the **Dorothy** in Llangollen but I cannot confirm the origin. Can anyone supply further information?

John Skinner

As a very new member (I joined CTA at the beginning of this month) I feel rather guilty about drawing your attention to an error (but I felt I should!). Living in Kingston-upon-Thames until I was 10 and then Surbiton until I was 24, the photo at the bottom of page 18 popped out at me for two reasons; 1) the Odeon Surbiton was one of the cinemas I frequented in the 1950s and 1960s and 2) my dad was appearing in the film that was showing when the photograph was taken! The photo is from 1971 or later, not the 1950s as stated. The cinema is advertising the (first) film version of *Dad's Army* as showing 'Today'. The film came out in 1971. My dad, stage name Edward Sinclair, played the part of The Verger in the TV series and the film. I'm enjoying reading the two editions of the Bulletin and enjoyed the Zoom presentation on Frank E Bromige.

Keith Perry

Editor's Note: My mistake. Clive at the Archive sent me two images – 1950s and 1970s – and I put the wrong caption on the one I used.

MATTERS ARISING

Concerning the recent correspondence concerning Dufay Colour. The *Radio Parade* of 1935 is one of the best recreations of music hall and variety material I have come across. However I have two copies, one is under copyright control with a [U] certificate and the other copy is in the Public Domain with a [PG] certificate! The Public Domain copy has these words on the outside: "This Film is in the Public Domain; it does not affect any other copyrights". It is not clear how a film falls into the Public Domain or whether it affects the marketable value. It is not known whether a television channel – such as *Talking Pictures* – can show a Public Domain copy as I have not seen this annotation on a film. It is also not known if cinemas are licensed by the local authorities to show Public Domain films. Doubtless there are some CTA members who do know.



Recent correspondence has also covered the problem whether it is a good idea to use the façade of a cinema when the auditorium has been demolished. A good example of a successful conversion is the former Evington cinema [above] in Leicester. The auditorium was demolished after a fire and housing was built behind the façade. This photo, which I took some time ago, shows the attractive conversion, which won an architect's award. The subject of retaining part of a building which has lost its original purpose applies to Southampton, which was extensively bombed during the war. The only part of bombed Southampton that is retained is a small part near the Central

station known as Blechynden. Although tidied up a few years ago, it is still not a particularly attractive area. I am in two minds about whether it would have been better to have cleared the area completely.

Ian Patterson

Further to the articles about old theatres and cinemas in Leicester I am



enclosing a photograph of the cinema in nearby Abbey Street under the later names of Belle Vue and City cinema [above]. Further information has come to hand about the other old theatres. The Pavilion on the corner of Belgrave Gate and Wilton Street started as the **Old Cheese** in 1864 and was renamed **Paul's Concert Music Hall** in 1876. It subsequently was renamed the **Prince of Wales Theatre** and the **Midland Music Hall** but was destroyed by fire in 1889. The new building on the site was renamed **The Prince of Wales Theatre of Variety** dating from 1890 but changed hands in 1892, being renamed **The New Theatre of Varieties**. Moving pictures were first shown there in 1896. The new theatre was wound up in 1898. In 1891 it became the **Pavilion**. It became known as **The Old Pav**. It closed in 1930 and was demolished for road widening. Older residents remembered it as a rowdy dowdy music hall where the audience used to throw coins at the performers. Things sometimes got out of control and the police had to be called; the police station was just nearby! The **Hippodrome** on the corner of Wharf Street and Gladstone Street dated from 1862 but changed its name to **New Oxford Music Hall** and was rented out in 1869 to the **Hallelujah Band**. Subsequent name and other changes were:

1880 Gladstone Hall

1883 Gaiety Palace of Varieties

At this time the Elephant Man Joseph Merrick exhibited himself.

1896 Moving pictures were first shown there.

1908 Empire Theatre showing films full-time.

1921 Hippodrome Cinema

1940 Cinema closed

The building narrowly escaped the slum clearance of the 1960s and remained under other ownership until very recently, when it was demolished. There is some interesting information about the area on the Leicester Mercury website www.leicestermercury.co.uk.

Ian Patterson

QUERIES FROM LAST BULLETIN ANSWERED

The Darncombe Kinema, Moss Side (p17), was opened in 1910 by Harold Ernest Buxton, a dyers' traveller and Fred Hargeaves, an electrical engineer. The Cinema, Polperro (p28), was owned by Edwin Pearn (1888-1949) a Looe coal merchant, who also owned the Regent Cinema in Looe. His will describes him as a Cinema Proprietor. It was referred to as the **Polperro Cinema** in 1955 and at that time was operated by Edwin Pearn's son, Keith and his widow, Susan.

Terry Hanstock

I visited Polperro in Cornwall for holidays in the 1970s and 80s. I don't recall any adverts for films or seeing a building that would have been a cinema. Polperro has a model village (opened 1948), which I never visited but wish I had. They may hold the answer as sometimes they include the above.

Richard Hawkins

Editor's Note: *Cinema Treasures* suggests that the Polperro Cinema closed in the mid-1960s and the building is still standing. {64732}



I fully concur with Doug Raynes that the exterior of the Public Hall cinema in Brynamman does not reflect the attractiveness of the interior (see page 14 of the September/October Bulletin) but it previously did do justice to the building as this photograph [above] of the original façade illustrates. I also include an image of the present façade [R] for comparison. What were they thinking of?



John Skinner

IDENTIFICATION PARADE

Roger Shone believes the couple on page 31 of the last Bulletin are Barbara and Richard Lyon from *Life with the Lyons* 1953. I think the man looks like Harry Fowler.

David A Ellis

Just read your query about the young stars in the photo on page 31 of the Bulletin. I am fairly certain they are Harry Fowler and Joan Dowling, who were husband and wife, although whether or not they were married at the time the photo was taken I don't of course know.

Gareth Snowden-Davies

Some more thoughts on the mystery photo on p31. I think it is definitely Harry Fowler with his wife, actress Joan Dowling. She committed suicide in March 1954 so I'd say the photo was taken in 1953 when Harry was touring the country promoting his film *Top of the Form*.

Terry Hanstock

Re the photo in Bulletin 55/5, the film stars in the picture with Mr Hozier are Harry Fowler and his wife, Joan Dowling. They both appeared in the film, *Hue and Cry* in 1947. It's possible that they were making a personal appearance at the cinema to help publicise the film. Joan Dowling committed suicide at the age of 26. Harry Fowler died in 2016.

Les Woods.

Further to your question about the young couple shown in the photograph taken at the Odeon Bristol – it looks like Harry Fowler and his then wife, Joan Dowling, who tragically, committed suicide in 1954.

David Evans

The picture on page 31 Mr Francis Hozier and film stars. I'm sure that you have identified them by now but I guess that one is Harry Fowler but I don't recognise the young lady.

John Powell

SO, HOW MANY ARE LEFT NOW?

The recent Bulletin features the welcoming news of the Globe at Stockton-on-Tees being restored and then notes the Odeon Chorley being demolished. When I joined the CTA in 1982 there were many cinemas still in their unaltered state and active, I just did not think that so many would soon go to bingo or become dark. Over the last 40 years these wonderful halls have bitten the dust and so I wonder, right now, how many are there still left to go? The Theatres at Risk Register shows some but there will be others, including once prominent medium-sized 1930 supers now boarded-up and awaiting their fate. But just how many – ten, twenty – maybe fifty? There is unlikely to be any kind of 'list' as such and I suspect we will only learn of each individual passing when it is reported in the local media or here.

Edward Huggins

SCREEN POLICY

I know that many of the multi-purpose Community Halls and those theatres that occasionally show movies will, by necessity, fly a flat screen without any other form of facility. Maybe I just don't get out enough but I am not sure of the current policy is on screens for new builds by the larger chains? I know that (mercifully) Odeon always used to specify curved screens and full tabs in their multiplexes but others, such as Vue and Cineplex, would usually just opt for flat screens and often without tabs – and sometimes even any form of masking. I wonder whether esteemed members might comment on what they know as to the typical screen specifications that are now employed by the medium-to-large sized cinema operators?

Edward Huggins

UNIDENTIFIED CINEMAS

On p7 of the last Bulletin it says that photo 047 could be in the Portsmouth area. I know all the cinemas in the area, both the façades and the rear of the buildings and I am 99% sure photo 047 is not a cinema in that area. The pitch of the roof is unusual and the building seems to be too long for an auditorium. Although the car registration is Portsmouth, it might have moved to another location. In the old days, cars stayed mostly in the locality; these times car registrations are a lot different.

Richard Hawkins



On p7 of the last Bulletin is a photo E41 of a Kwik Save conversion. It looks like the cinema that used to be my local, the Crompton [photo above] in Bolton, which was in Lancashire but is now in Greater Manchester. It was named after Samuel Crompton, inventor of the spinning mule, who lived not far away. The cinema was on the ring road named Crompton Way. If there are any members in Bolton who would like to get in touch, we could do a list of Bolton cinemas that I know are no longer there.

Jean Shevelan

Editor's Note: Unfortunately, Jean is wrong in her identification. It is the Savoy in Syston, Leicester {47872} – see p28. If any member would like to get in touch with Jean, please write to me and I will pass it on.

ANTIQUES?



The Paignton Picture House (1914) featured in an edition of the *Antiques Road Trip* on 17 September showing the £2.7m restoration taking place. Antiques expert Irita Marriott was shown around the building. It was on BBC1 at 4:30pm. The Victoria Pavilion (Winter Gardens) in Morecambe, which is also under restoration, featured on *Flog It!* On 22 September when Paul Martin viewed the building. It showed the mis-spelling of 'Pavillion' in the mosaic floor [above].

Tom Laughlan

CHANGING THE CANOPY

When I worked in the cinema trade, one of my favourite jobs each week was 'dressing the canopy' – in other words, putting up the film titles on the cinema canopy. It doesn't seem like an exciting job but if it's done properly, it can be a rewarding one. As nobody else was interested in climbing a ladder on a Thursday night – particularly a wet and windy Thursday night – and moving letters around, it soon became my responsibility and I quickly came to what I considered a winning format. I would use 15-inch letters for the film title, 10-inch letters for the names of the leading actor(s) and 5-inch letters for the movie tagline. The name of the actor would obviously be at the top of the canopy with the film title below and the tag line beneath that. The letters we used were made from red plastic with metal hooks on the reverse to hang on the thin wires that stretched tautly across the canopy Perspex, which would be illuminated at night. Everything would be spaced equally but if there were strong winds, letters might be blown off or moved along the canopy to create some rather strange sounding titles.

I would always double check the spellings of anything I put up but one night I didn't check the whereabouts of a mischievous colleague, who was always getting the rest of us into trouble with his 'pranks'. On the night in question I had put up *Uncle Buck*, the classic John Hughes directed comedy starring John Candy, which was opening in our main screen the following day. As I made myself a cuppa before changing the posters, this colleague grabbed the ladders and removed the B, replacing it with a F. We were only alerted to what he had done by passing cars honking their horns. Fortunately our manager rarely emerged from his office and even more rarely checked what we were doing so nobody got into trouble. Changing the letters on a canopy is now as rare as 35mm film but they were fun times – except for those wet and windy nights when you kept one hand on the ladder!

Mike Whitcombe

Editor's Note: I remember reading somewhere many years ago that a cinema showing *Lawrence of Arabia* had put on the canopy: "An Epic of Sun, Sand and Adventure." During the night some wag got a ladder and changed it to: "Spice, Fun and Ten Doves!" I've checked it and it does work – although there are a few letters left over; wonder what he did with them?

DORCHESTER BREAK



I went on a break to Dorchester this week. I visited the **Plaza** and saw a film in the refurbished Screen ①. Tabs with changing colours, original light fittings and architectural features; all for £3.99!

Malcolm Davis

NOSTALGIA

I was a war baby, born in 1943 and I was an only child, as my mother had a bad time with me – 9lbs, oven-ready. But I was a happy, naughty boy, always with plenty of mates in the road we lived in. In those days there was only the radio, medium wave fading in and out, Radio Luxembourg at night. Our other outlet was the cinema, which we went to Saturday mornings at the *Granada Sevenoaks*, which was our favourite. The *Odeon* tried it but it didn't get going so they packed up. After the show it was back home on the bus for dinner.

In the afternoon I would go back into town with mum and dad to do shopping and we would finish up at the cinema again but still the *Granada* as *Odeon* films didn't appeal to us. Then back home – no TV, only radio. Then on Sunday I would ask mum and dad to go to the cinema again as they ran serials on a Sunday. So mostly the whole weekend was the cinema.



One of the serials was *Phantom Empire*, which *Talking Pictures TV* have been running on a Saturday morning but it doesn't hold the same magic as it did years ago. "Open Sesame" was the cry and the garage doors would go up, Gene Autry would ride into the underground city.

I have been going to the cinema ever since but not so much in the last few years as modern films just don't appeal like films used to – no second feature, only adverts etc. I met my wife Rita on a coach trip back in 1963 and we hit it off. We were married in 1968 and still going to the cinema quite a lot. We carried on going to the cinema at weekends, mostly changed to the **Plaza Oxted** as it was closer to home. I befriended Bill Pryor, who was the projectionist there; there was only one show at nights but more at weekends. I started to go just to see him and my Rita would go in with Bill's wife as they had a flat at the cinema. As time went on, Rita was asked if she would like a little job with the sales tray, selling ice creams etc, which she did and made a few pounds.

Out of the blue Bill told me they needed help at *Tunbridge Wells*, which was always very busy. I went to see them and they gave me a job, just two evenings a week to start with, then it grew into weekends. It worked out OK, even with travelling but they paid for that. After a while they asked me if I would like to go full-time, which I agreed to do after many years of plumbing and heating. Later, they asked me if I could do relief at other cinemas so I did *Hastings* and *East Grinstead*.

Going back to *Tunbridge Wells*, there were four of us in the box, a two-on and two-off shift system. Working a seven-day fortnight let us have plenty of time off. The only thing I didn't like was going in Sunday mornings to make up programmes that came in from other cinemas the night before.

The cinema was in the middle of town and the main railway line ran right under the cinema. If you were in the old stalls, you could hear the trains rumbling under the cinema in quiet sections of the film. I'm sorry the cinema has gone and it might have been open today if they hadn't built the 'tin shed' *Odeon* down in the industrial area. Other cinemas also lost in the *Tunbridge Wells* area are the *Cosmos* *Manston Road*, the *Opera House*, now *Wetherspoons* (which was rear projection) the *Great Hall* opposite the railway station and the *Roxy*.

Alan Scott

BOOK OF COMEDY

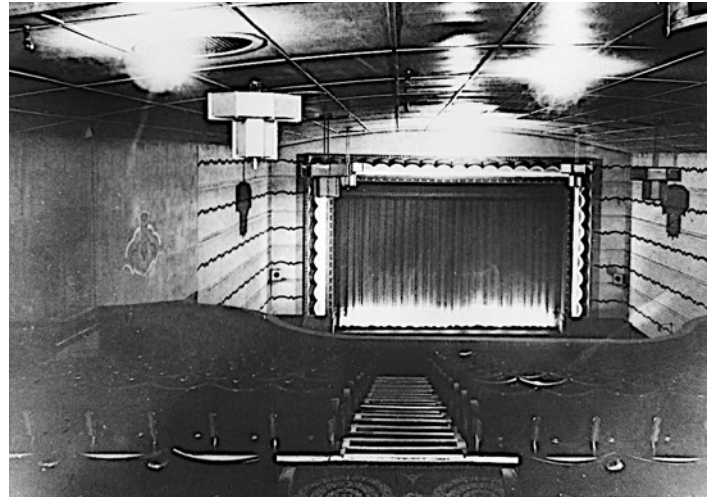
A new book may be of interest to members: *Forgotten Heroes of Comedy* by Robert Ross. It has biographies of about 120 comedy stars of the past, mostly British but some American, many of whom appeared in films. ISBN: 978-1783529186, £22.29 on Amazon.

R David Simpson

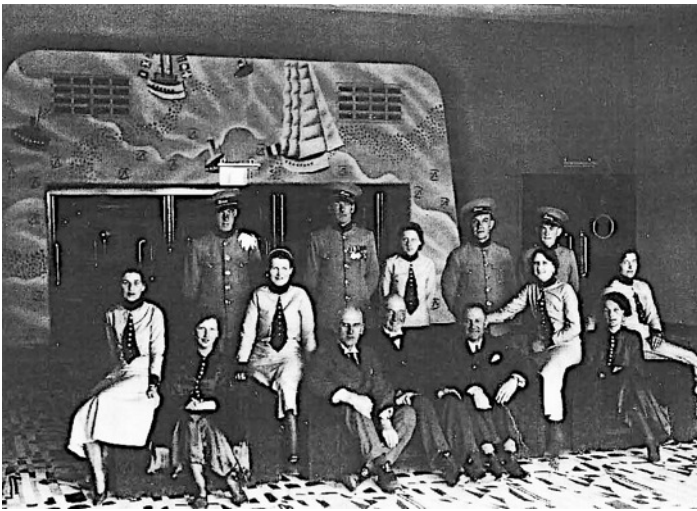
UNIDENTIFIED CINEMA PHOTOGRAPHS



I.03 – no additional information



Int1017 – Gaumont carpet



E13 – Nautical themed foyer; Gaumont Chichester maybe?



Int150 – Showing the Gaumont release 1933



292 / F18 Cosy Cinema



F87 – maybe Gaumont Chichester or Coventry?



Ex227 – 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 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).

ONLY ONE SOLVED FROM THE LAST BULLETIN:

E41 – Savoy Syston, Leicester [47872] by Darron Keeling;

Thank you, everybody, for having a look.

Darron Keeling

VISIT NOTES NOT IN THE CTA ARCHIVE

Members may recall that for the 50th Anniversary of the CTA a list of all visits was compiled. Work is ongoing to have records of all the cinemas visited. The following is a list of the visits for which the Archive doesn't hold any visit notes. If members have visit notes for these and would be willing to donate them to the Archive, please do get in touch. If you happen to know that there were no visit notes prepared for any of these, then also please let me know.

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist – contact details on p2

1986	
Brixton.....	20 April
Oxford and Abingdon.....	13 July
Marble Arch and Edgware Road.....	3 August
Tunbridge Wells, East Grinstead and Oxted.....	7 September
Cinemas of North Wales.....	4 - 5 October
Harlow and Waltham Cross.....	23 November
Camden and Swiss Cottage.....	7 December
1987	
Woolwich and Eltham.....	11 January
Portsmouth and Surroundings.....	12 April
A Romford Roam seeking Tasker's tasks.....	19 April
Cinemas of Ipswich and East Suffolk.....	31 May
Cinemas and Theatres of Eastbourne.....	20 September
Up the Northern Line #1.....	13 December
1988	
Birmingham Day.....	31 January
Manchester Weekend.....	2 - 4 April
Tooting Granada.....	5 June
Ewell and Kingston Day.....	23 October
1989	
Cinemas & Theatres of Lancashire Cotton Towns.....	25 - 29 March
1990	
Easter Weekend in Bradford.....	14 - 16 April
1991	
Norwich Day.....	16 June
Kings Cross and Islington.....	23 November
1992	
Leicester Square: Odeons and Empire.....	4 July
Harrogate.....	9 August
Summer get-together at Braintree.....	6 September
Troxy Stepney.....	8 November
1993	
BAFTA, Odeon Haymarket & MGM Trocadero.....	17 January
Dominion Tottenham Court Road & AGM.....	20 March
Troxy Stepney and Wiltons Music Hall.....	7 November
1994	
CTA Archive and Brixton Visit.....	4 June
1997	
Glyndebourne and Uckfield Day.....	8 February
.....	(repeated 15 Nov)
2000	
Return to Tooting – A Grade I visit.....	3 December
2001	
Visit to Ilford.....	24 November
2002	
Good bye to All That (Colchester).....	28 September
2003	
Alexandra Palace London.....	1 June
2005	
London Coliseum Visit	2 June
2011	
Muswell Hill & East Finchley.....	23 October
2014	
Promenade in Blackpool.....	18 - 20 July
2015	
Assorted Bournemouth Cinemas.....	30 September - 3 October

2016	
West End Welcome.....	24 February
Victoria Palace London.....	?? April
London Palladium.....	21 April
.....	(repeated 17 Nov)
Odyssey St Albans (AGM).....	7 May
Her Majesty's Theatre London.....	26 October

2018	
Double Feature: A visit to Catford and Eltham.....	12 May
East is Best.....	4 July
Berkhamsted Double Bill 16.....	October

2019	
Up and Down Hill and into the Woods.....	12 - 14 June
Flicks in Fenland.....	13 July
A Sunny Saturday in Surrey.....	7 September

OVERSEAS VISITS

2002 Hooray for Bollywood.....	12 - 23 February
2016 Theatres and Cinemas of Bologna, Italy.....	19 - 25 September
2017 To the Island – Exploration of Gotland.....	12 - 18 August

NEWS FROM THE ARCHIVE

Thank you to the members who got in touch to confirm that the film stars featured in the publicity photograph on p31 of the last Bulletin was Harry Fowler (1926-2012) and his first wife Joan Dowling (1928-1954) – see also letters p25 this issue.



A new donation of material has been received relating to Mr W McLarty, who was the manager of the ABC cinema in Hamilton, Scotland. Amongst it is the above publicity photograph, showing Mr McLarty on the right. Can anyone identify the other people in the picture? Any further information about Mr McLarty would also be gratefully received

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

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

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.

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ tinyurl.com/4mx5eu4n From the *Manchester Evening News* – inside the Victoria Theatre Salford; over 40 photos. {2056}
- ★ tinyurl.com/dzs2ft62 From the *Lancashire Telegraph* – the Central Cinema Blackburn. {35000} above 2 items sent in by Philip Crompton
- ★ tinyurl.com/y3dcnx2v From the *Sheffield Star* about the 101-year-old Abbeydale cinema. {22681} sent in by Terry Hanstock
- ★ vimeo.com/5812171 A 26-minute video on the Uptown Theatre in Chicago, USA. Viewers either need a free Vimeo account or can log in with Facebook. {69} sent in by Gary Donaldson
- ★ youtu.be/nds3NaVbkWg A 15-minute film on Waterloo Station (London) from 1944. There is a sequence at the 2:46 minute mark showing a young couple buying tickets and going into the News Cinema. Once inside the cinema, the auditorium shown has decorative panels on the side walls, which were certainly not the inside of the News Theatre, which was a plain, Art Deco style. Does anyone know where these sequences were filmed? {13093} sent in by Ken Roe
- ★ tinyurl.com/y7n8tyk6 A 10¾ minute video tour of Leith Theatre, including the projection box that has never had a projector – yet!
- ★ tinyurl.com/ymn7vf3f Photos from the *Birmingham Mail* – inside the now-closed Wetherspoons in the former Imperial Walsall. {24723}
- ★ tinyurl.com/5cx6h8ts About the restored Lincoln Theatre in Columbus, Ohio, USA – 20 photos. {19388}
- ★ tinyurl.com/2en86z4e 14 pictures inside the Sun Theatre St Louis, Missouri, USA. {3219}
- ★ tinyurl.com/4bxthvbe From the *Irish Times* – The best designed cinemas in Ireland, old and new.
- ★ lostcinemas.co.uk The lost cinemas of Leeds. Contains an excellent interactive map of 83 cinemas and a walking tour of 13 in the City centre, each with audio description. Well recommended!
- ★ www.derelictlondon.com/cinemas Lots of sad photos.
- ★ tinyurl.com/wsyceenj Five of Manchester's lost cinemas.

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



From the Cinema Glass Slide collection of Ian Green

SMALL ADS

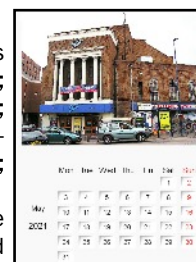
The rate for small ads from members is £3 for 25 words with name and address free, plus 15p for each extra word. Non-members rates: £5 & 25p respectively. Please send cheque or postal order (payable to the Cinema Theatre Association) to the Bulletin Editor, address on p2. Please quote membership number. 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

CINEMA CALENDAR 2022

with 12 colour photos of UK cinemas, taken this Century: Blackwood Maxime; Bradford Palladium; Campbelltown Picture House; Ipswich Cineworld; Maidstone Granada; Manchester Imperial; Northallerton Lyric; Ramsey Grand; Skelmanthorpe Savoy; Stonehouse Palace; Swansea Carlton; Truro Plaza. Price reduced to £5, including postage. Please make cheque payable to Harry Rigby or simply send £5 note to:

Harry Rigby, 65 Tennyson Avenue, Harrogate, HG1 3LE or email harry.rigby@ntlworld.com for details of how to pay by EFT and save yourself a stamp!



MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new members: Keith Perry, John Darvell, Bryan Matthew, Marjorie Laffin, Keith Newton, Geoff and Joan Suddens.

DONATIONS

Once more members have displayed their generosity by adding a donation to the renewal of their subscriptions. Our sincere thanks go to: MJ Bigham, CJ Bird, M Corder, MS Crowle, SJ Cusack, RD Dakin, RG Dolling, JS Downs, GB Fenwick, F Fitzjohn, M Gambles, HW Gibbs, P Hake, SD Harrison, P Hayward, JL Howarth, MF Jones, S Kieley, CP Kisicki, S Klabish, J&S Leworthy, PJ Littler, M Mills, N Mirza, AJ North, HW Patching, PR Phillips, NA Pithouse, WR Pratt, J Ramsden, G Reywer, JE Roberts, AS Rossiter, JT Rourke, W Simmons, TJ Smith, FD Snart, DG Towers, J Vaux and DR Williams.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Arthur Weise from Woking, Roger Howes from Sowerby Bridge, Kenneth Johnstone from Banff, William Twine from London and Laurie Marsh from London.

Ray Ritmeester, Membership Secretary

NORMAN ROBINS

My friend Norman Robins died on 3 September. He may not have maintained his CTA membership for the last year or two as he was experiencing some memory loss but he was a CTA member for many years and frequently sent newspaper cuttings about local cinemas into the Bulletin. He lived in the Stourbridge / Brierley Hill area in the Black Country all his life but was interested in cinemas wherever he found them. He was also very interested in the films, not just the cinemas and was a very loyal member of film societies in Dudley, Halesowen, Stourbridge and Brierley Hill. I frequently met him at screenings at these societies, at local cinemas and local history societies. He was always helpful and supportive to anyone investigating film and cinema history and would undertake little projects of his own like finding out the date and film title of the first CinemaScope presentation at every local cinema – a true enthusiast.

Ned Williams



NECROLOGY

MIKIS THEODORAKIS 96

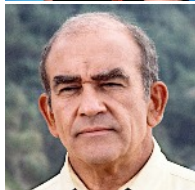
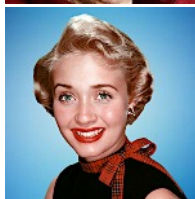
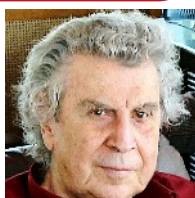
Composer of *Zorba the Greek*; the 1964 film won three Oscars. He also composed the music for at least 20 other films, including *Ill Met by Moonlight*, *Z* and *Serpico*. He went into politics and was awarded the Lenin Peace Prize.

JANE POWELL 92

Probably best known for her performance as cook Millie opposite Howard Keel in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* in 1954. She was also in several other MGM musicals, including *Royal Wedding* with Fred Astaire, *A Date With Judy* with Elizabeth Taylor and *Hit the Deck* with Debbie Reynolds.

ED ASNER 91

Ed is known to millions of children as Santa in *Elf* (2003). He voiced the lead character Carl Fredrickson in *Up* (2009). He was the most decorated male performer in the history of the Emmy awards with seven, five of them for playing Lou Grant on TV's *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*.



OBITUARIES

ARTHUR WEISE 93



Many members will remember Arthur Weise who died on 11 August. Arthur was a regular attendee at CTA events right up until the end of 2019, when a fall limited his activities. Arthur worked for British Aerospace at Weybridge as a draughtsman for over 40 years, starting with them during WWII when he was engaged on secret war work, the exact nature of which he never disclosed! His other interests were trams, trains and cinema organs, interests which took him all over the UK and overseas, usually accompanied by his wife Dorothy, who pre-deceased him in 2011. He was delighted when the Wurlitzer organ from the Granada Welling was reinstalled in a sports hall near his home at Woking in 1995. Arthur will be remembered for his dogged determination to keep going in the face of physical adversity and for his dry sense of humour.

Jeremy Buck

LAURIE MARSH 90



I fondly recall the help that Laurie gave to me for an interview at a CTA event (to which he invited Lord Rix and Ray Cooney as guests, both of them his close friends, who he had greatly assisted on their roads to fame). Laurie and his wife were also guests at a CTA Christmas party a couple of years ago held at the Carlton (Empire) Haymarket. I know that he also assisted and advised on property matters to keep the Cinema Museum going in their premises.

Richard Norman

Laurie and his wife Gillian have shown much interest in the Cinema Museum's welfare and progress towards its long-term future. Laurie has strong memories of Kennington and Elephant and Castle, having a number of connections with this area in his youth as his parents had shops in Lambeth Walk. In a life focused on property, Laurie also produced over 75 films and had many connections with theatres and cinemas, including the Classic cinema chain, Essoldo cinemas and the Astoria Charing Cross Road. Laurie was a successful entrepreneur who used his skills and experience to support the arts, our heritage and the environment – his life has had a significant positive influence on so many other people. In 2016 his fascinating autobiography *The Philanthropist's Tale* was published and launched at the museum.

The Cinema Museum

BIRTH OF A STAR

By Tim McCullen

In a letter on p30 of Bulletin 47/6 [Nov/Dec 2013] I asked if anyone had information about the former **Stella** cinema in Bantry, County Cork, Ireland. There was no response from the membership but that may have been because I wrote 'Botany Bay' instead of 'Bantry Bay'. The answer is to be found in *Irish Cinemas* by Jim Keenan. I wrote to Jim and he gave permission to print an extract from his book [below]; he also kindly sent some photos and a copy of the local newspaper report of the opening in April 1927 [opposite]. {52035}



The Stella Bantry operating as a cinema in the 1970s

Founded by John M Murphy, the **Stella Cinema** opened on 26 April 1927. It seated about 500 and the first film shown there was *The Midshipman*, Under the heading 'A rat goes to the pictures', the *Irish Press* reported on 27 October 1955 that "Women screamed in Bantry's **Stella Cinema** when a rat got into the parterre during a showing of *Sabrina Fair*." Early on the morning of 15 July 1942, a serious fire occurred at the cinema, which completely destroyed it, leaving only the outer walls standing. It was rebuilt but by the late 1970s the cinema had deteriorated badly and the roof leaked. It closed for a major renovation and opened again on 25 July 1980 with *The Empire Strikes Back*. The newly-refurbished cinema seated 203 (124 in the stalls and 79 in the balcony). It continued to operate throughout the 1980s but was put up for sale in 1990. In recent years the building was used as a furniture store then offices for the Bantry Show. it had no connection to the **Stella** in Rathmines in Dublin.



The Stella Bantry in September 2017

Stella Cinema, Bantry

We have been instructed by the Reps. of the late Mr. William Rex Murphy to offer for sale as a going concern the **Stella Cinema**, Wolfe Tone Square, Bantry. The cinema is currently enjoying a good business as it has a contract for the supply of all the latest releases. The premises is ideally situated in Wolfe Tone Square to lend itself to any type of business, such as shopping complex incorporating small cinema, etc.

SOLR: O'Donovan, Murphy & Co. Bantry
Full particulars and appointment to view:
KEY PROPERTIES, ESTATE AGENTS, BANTRY
TEL: (027) 501111 FAX No. (027) 51601

BIRTH OF A STAR

On the very kindly invitation of the proprietors and the management of the new picture hall, the **Stella** in Bantry, a press party attended at the opening ceremony on Tuesday evening. Editorial and reportorial, we were all asked to the party and those of us who were able to call round received a real stellar welcome.

It was a big night in the town of the famous lyric. Every lassie to her sailor lad (or possibly to her bank clerk or Civic Guard) was handing out the glad eye and when the saxophonist, with a soft note tuning, weighed in at about 9-o'clock, there was no thought of that third minor verse of that great song and the ending that must come to us all.

The **Stella** is a real addition to Bantry. Occupying a fine site and structurally very imposing, this latest addition to the amusement venues of West Cork immediately catches the eye of the visitor to the town. Inside, everything is of the best and cosiest. No detail that might make for the comfort and enjoyment of patrons has been overlooked. Undoubtedly the Bros Murphy have in the **Stella** a very definite and distinguished achievement to their credit. A real nice trio of boys they are too, deserving success which is attending their enterprises in Bantry, Skibbereen and Bere Island.

The hall is fitted to seat five hundred people but there were about five hundred extra in the vicinity of the **Stella** on Tuesday evening. I pitied the box-office man and all the rest of the staff who were doing their best to cope with the crush. Those who were too late and who had, perforce, to remain in the square, would have filled any cinema in West Cork bar the **Stella**.

I liked the picture but, better still, I liked the music. Mrs Baldwin was at the piano and our friend Denis Murphy was bringing the harmonics out of the violin. Denis plays in the Skibbereen Cinema and at most of our local dances. A new chum, a friend of Jack Murphy, came along with his saxophone and was responsible for applause in the hall. The picture, *The Midshipman* was good but when Joe and his sparring partner on the effects, Reggie Williams, got going, all the audience forgot the screen and wanted to do a Charleston over the tip-up chairs.

Mr Walter Prendergast, the most efficient and assiduous of managers, was moving around seeing to the comfort of all. Here is a citizen whose business acumen, possibly, has not yet been quite appreciated in West Cork; his good nature and gentlemanliness have been perceived for months back by some of us. Mr Tom Hurley, the man who (when all is said and written) puts the pictures before us, was also on the ground. The projection on Tuesday evening was perfect. Personally, I like that big bloke, Tom Hurley; he reminds me of Buck Jones.

At the conclusion of the programme, Mr PJ Cullinane, UDC Skibbereen, wished good luck to the house. His remarks, expressed in a sporting spirit and in sporting language, were very favourably received. Mr Michael Murphy replied in appropriate terms.

Southern Star - Saturday 30 April 1927

Join the

CINEMA ORGAN SOCIETY

For the best news and views about
the wonderful world of the theatre organ

🎵 Bi-monthly newsletter 🎵 Quarterly glossy magazine 🎵

Full membership only £26 a year

Concert news	Conventions	Private practice
Record reviews	Social events	Open console meetings
Organised visits	Workshops	Recorded music evenings

For membership details and sample publications contact

David Shepherd, COS Membership Secretary
Dolby House, Barrington Gate, Holbeach, Spalding, PE12 7DA
or email: membership@cinema-organs.org.uk

www.cinema-organs.org.uk