



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

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January / February 2022



The former Gaumont Plymouth in June 2008



The former Plaza Hessle [Hull] as a Spar shop in May 2004

FROM YOUR EDITOR

At the beginning on November, I got a new PC. I had a bit of difficulty in transferring my data across from the old one. In particular, I think I lost a few emails. If you emailed me about that time and were expecting an answer but haven't had one, please contact me again. On p11 you will see that the lady in the photo on p29 of the last Bulletin has been identified as Sylvia Syms. I'm sure someone else also sent me this but I'm sorry it has disappeared into the ether.

I hope my new PC is better at spelling than the last one. I must apologise to Tim McCullen for spelling his first name wrongly on p11 of the last Bulletin – I got it right on p32!

Mike Whitcombe has written an excellent article about the CTA, which was published in the January 2022 edition of *Best of British* magazine, www.bestofbritishmag.co.uk. If you would like a copy of the article by email [5Mb], please email me at the Bulletin address opposite.

There is an organisation called the Community Transport Association [CTA] which, as well as the same initials, has a similar Internet address to ours. Please make sure that you include the hyphen when typing ours.

I have finally written the article I promised, *A Beginner's Guide to the Projection Room*. It is based on a talk I have given several times, starting in 1975. I used to finish the talk with the song *Stereophonic Sound* from the 1957 musical *Silk Stockings* – in those days I could only use the sound; today's technology allows me to show the video clip. I like the bit where Fred Astaire sings, "The customers don't like to see the groom embrace the bride, unless her lips are scarlet and her mouth is five feet wide! In glorious Technicolor, breathtaking CinemaScope and stereophonic sound." It is available in the full Bulletin.

If you haven't already subscribed to the CTA e-newsletter, you can do so through the CTA website at: cinema-theatre.org.uk/newsletter

If you have a question about anything other than Bulletin content, can I please ask that you look at the Committee list opposite and contact the appropriate person directly. If you contact me, I only have to pass it on. Queries about non-delivery of the Bulletin should be addressed to the Membership Secretary.

It only remains for me to wish you all a Happy New Year.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

Coming Soon

The Live Presentation in February, trailed on p4 of the last Bulletin, has been **CANCELLED** due to the situation with the Omicron variant of Covid-19.

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

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enquiry; this address will be monitored and e-mails redirected if necessary.

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CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

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

Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
SUNDAY 20 FEBRUARY

CTA VIRTUAL TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

Saturday 5 February at 5:30pm

(UK time) (Zoom talk No 15)

A GOLDEN MILE OF CINEMAS BY ANDREW WOODYATT

The Inner London district of Dalston boasts a Golden Mile of cinemas – but is it the birthplace of UK cinema-going?

Andrew's fascinating talk will set the scene and then take us back to visit the lost cinemas of Dalston and Stoke Newington, noting some of the landmark firsts that they claimed, exploring their bold and contentious statements. Was Amhurst Hall actually the first purpose-built cinema in the UK?

The talk will include an in-depth look into the early life of one of Britain's favourite repertory cinemas – the Rio Dalston – a contender for the oldest continuously operating cinema in the UK.

Focusing on its pre-Rio life to 1936 as the **Kingsland Empire**, one of the grandest early silent cinemas, we will take a virtual trip around the ornate 1915 George Coles building and be the first to see new exclusively filmed footage from within the ghostly surviving remains of the earlier auditorium, unseen by the public for 85 years. We'll also hear recently discovered descriptions of its lavish and unusual interior, before its total remodelling by FE Bromige in 1937 (which was covered in our earlier Bromige talk).

Our presenter Andrew Woodyatt is a long-time CTA member involved with the management of the Rio Cinema. His A level art project on the cinemas of Derby in 1982 led to a 30+ year career in exhibition, distribution and production, also managing the PR and marketing for the Rio, the Phoenix East Finchley and the newly opened Act One in Acton. He also lectures in film marketing at Goldsmiths University.



A colourised view of the 1915 Kingsland Empire Dalston under construction (latterly the Rio)

BOOKING YOUR TICKET

CTA Zoom talks are open to everyone – members and non-members alike. Members: £3 and Non-Members: £5 per device



Zoom talk starts at 5:30pm (log-in from 5:15pm)

Booking is done on-line using TicketSource.

www.ticketsource.co.uk

Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre Association' into their Search Box. (Talk No 15.)

Saturday 5 March at 5:30pm

(UK time) (Zoom talk No 16)

THE LAST CINEMAS OF MOROCCO BY FRANÇOIS BEURAIN

Mention Morocco to any filmgoer and they immediately think of *Casablanca*. Ever-striving to bring you variety, the CTA now invites you to explore the cinemas of Morocco. Our guide is François Beurain, who has recently published a book on the subject. François will be presenting his unique photographic record of the predominantly Art Deco cinemas of Morocco that have managed to survive in its most popular towns. François says:

"Morocco holds an incredible heritage of movie theatres built between 1913 and now. Such a diversity of movie theatres in such a shape is rare. Unlike Europe, where the vintage movie theatres have been turned into multiplexes, the Kingdom's cinemas have kept their architecture and their identity. Unfortunately, this heritage is in danger. Many movie theatres are closing down and many of them have already been destroyed. The arrival of TV, VHS and finally the Internet has caused massive public disaffection. Out of 240 theatres in operation in the 1980s, only 20 were still in activity in 2021. Because of the pandemic and the lockdown, the current situation is now catastrophic".

His book *Cinéma du Maroc* (*Cinemas of Morocco*) is a photo and history book of this previously overlooked heritage and it will undoubtedly raise public awareness. An English-language version of his book is expected for 2022.



Auditorium of Aveinida Theatre Tetouan (photo FB)



Untitled Auditorium, Morocco (photo FB)

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www.ticketsource.co.uk

Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre Association' into their Search Box. (Talk No 16.)

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 2020 are £4.00 per year (6 issues), individual copies are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2021 and 2022 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.

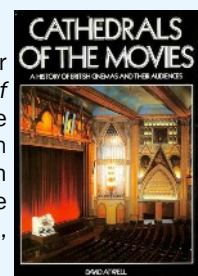
Ordering details below.

Recently Published (reviewed in previous Bulletin)

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)

Second-Hand Books

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

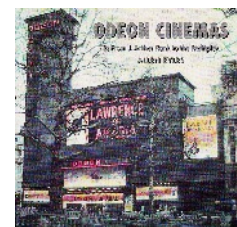
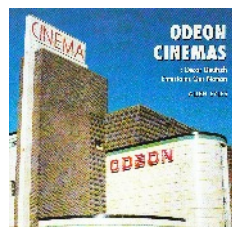


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For post and packing: total order value up to £20.00 please add £3.40, total order value from £20.01 to £40.00 please add £4.40, total order value from £40.01 to £60.00 please add £6.40. For larger orders and overseas, please contact the Sales Officer,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

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 above.

HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II* Listed

One of the bas-relief panels situated on the exterior of the New Victoria in London has sustained severe damage. Investigation has been initiated into the feasibility of restoration of the feature, which is composed of Lap, a trademarked aluminous cement material.

Negotiations with Historic England concerning the unauthorised alteration to approved plans for ingress to the third screen of the Dome at Worthing proceed with scant notable progress. It seems improbable that an entirely satisfactory outcome will result.

Grade II Listed

The Odeon, now Empire, at Sutton Coldfield is currently closed and awaiting significant remedial work. The car park is to be sold for development in order to fund this endeavour, planning details of which are currently being sought.



Deterioration of the Ritz in Ilkeston continues unabated and includes destruction of glass in one of the internal foyer doors; meanwhile the shop-units in the structure have been rented out and a listed building consent application has been submitted, which latter will receive scrutiny from the CTA. *photo taken September 2003*

It is reported that the owner of the Odeon in Loughborough is considering leasing the cinema to an undisclosed operator.



The Grand Casino in Southport has remained vacant for some years and is steadily decaying. Mikhail Hotel and Leisure Group has purchased the cinema and certain surrounding structures; currently no planning application has been advanced and thus the company's intentions are at present indeterminate. *photo taken June 2021*

Shrewsbury Town Council has decided against advancing redevelopment plans for the Granada.

Scott Cinemas Ltd has now sold the site of the Regent in Lyme Regis. The local group pressing for rebuilding of the cinema is attempting to acquire its designation as an Asset of Community Value. The Association has been involved in discussions with the local Conservation Officer.

The listing application for the Regal in Rotherham proved successful and thus it now enjoys this limited degree of protection. As the area accommodates no live theatre, the Theatres Trust has approached Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council in order to promulgate the building's potential repurposing as such. *photo on p25 Bulletin 55/4*

Unlisted

Advice is to be proffered to a local campaigner who wishes to secure Asset of Community Value status for the Palace in Alton.

Councils of the areas comprising The Black Country are seeking nominations for local listing of buildings within their purviews. The Association is thus intending to submit seven cinemas for consideration.

Planning permission for demolition of the major section of the Westover [ABC] in Bournemouth has ultimately been granted, with provisos that full recording of the structure and salvage of significant remaining elements will be undertaken. This will be assiduously monitored locally. The current owner has now placed the cinema on the market.

In seemingly contradictory manner, Historic England has suspended consideration of listing of the Brontë in Haworth until compliance with the local planning authority's enforcement action against the owner has been executed appropriately.

Whilst it is pleasing that the CTA has been approached by the architectural practice engaged upon a scheme involving the Plaza in Hessele [Hull], counsel is problematic as the building exhibits a somewhat undistinguished exterior and the interior has been greatly compromised. Photographs of the latter reveal little and accordingly a site visit is proposed in order to determine advice which may be advanced. *photo on front cover*

Contact with the local Conservation Officer in Milton Keynes has revealed that councillors have shown no enthusiasm for local listing of the Point. Galliard Homes Ltd. has now purchased the property, which is currently occupied by a charitable organisation which may not enjoy sufficient resources to acquire it from the developer.



Purcell Architecture Limited has conducted an assessment of the Conservation Area in Plymouth, which has advocated that the local listing of the Royal be downgraded; unsurprisingly, the Association has objected. *photo taken June 2008*

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

WANTED: Pre-war *Kinematograph Weekly* magazines for purchase. David Eve – evecinema@talk21.com

THE HYDE PARK PICTURE HOUSE LEEDS

The Hyde Park Picture House in Leeds kept a fastidious daily record of takings, ticket sales and film showings after it opened in 1914. About five years ago, a mystery woman dropped off a bin bag filled with almost 30 old ledgers detailing about 40 years of early activity at the cinema. The scrupulous logs cover the titles being shown, the daily takings and other observations, such as the day's weather. "Reading through the logs draws you in; it is quite evocative," says Ollie Jenkins, from the Hyde Park. www.hydeparkpicturehouse.co.uk



The Hyde Park Leeds in June 2005, showing the listed lamppost

Not long after the cinema opened, the 1918-19 Spanish Flu pandemic was to have a remarkable effect on daily life in Leeds. On its opening day, Monday 2 November 1914, staff sold 429 tickets across two screenings of *My Only Son*, taking just under £9. As World War One took hold, the cinema continued to open its doors, screening patriotic dramas and newsreels to boost morale in its gas-lit auditorium. It is October 1918 – a month before the Hyde Park's fourth birthday – when the logs first make mention of Spanish Flu, with an entry containing two stark words: "influenza epidemic". On 13 November, two days after the end of the war – which is marked by a special Armistice Day stamp in the ledger – the disease had reached the cinema. The cinema management took measures to try to stop the spread of the virus, as denoted by a logbook entry that reads: "Soldiers, sailors and children barred". By 25 November 1918 there is a change of heart and the ledger duly notes: "Soldiers and children admitted, influenza still bad".



Pages from the ledgers – courtesy Hyde Park Picture House



The interior of the Hyde Park on a CTA visit in June 2010

"The flu crisis felt like a very sad time as it combined with the end of World War One," says Mr Jenkins. "The war followed by that illness contained a long period of disruption for the cinema and customers but a big function of the cinema was to show the newsreels and boosting morale with patriotic films. "There are lots of similarities with what we've gone through with Covid," says Mr Jenkins. "It shows some of the equivalents to our restrictions, including measures on soldiers and sailors, who would have been travelling across borders in packed conditions."

Known as Spanish Flu, the virus was thought to have begun in cramped, crowded and unsanitary army training camps on the Western Front – though the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [tinyurl.com/285y7dzz](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/s091918-flu.html) says there is no scientific consensus on its origin. It is estimated about one-third of the world's population became infected with the virus. Fatalities were estimated at least 50 million worldwide, it added.

Records at the University of Leeds [tinyurl.com/yckrv3a6](https://www.leeds.ac.uk/news/2018/10/18/flu-pandemic) show an "astounding 1,401 deaths in Leeds alone" in 1918, (a death rate of 3.28 per 1,000 of the population). The following year, in 1919, the number of deaths from influenza was still high at 623. The end of the war had left people undernourished and vulnerable, contributing to the severity of the 1918-19 pandemic, according to the University. Children, pregnant women and nursing mothers were particularly affected.

The daily logging of life at Hyde Park Picture House continued unabated and cinema records show royal events such the Prince of Wales' visit to the City in 1923 and a rare day's closure for the death of King George V in 1936. During World War Two, air raids and gunfire were mentioned alongside cinema attendances. The records come to a halt in 1958 and cinema staff hope in future to digitise and properly research the treasure trove.



The mosaic floor at the Hyde Park Picture House

The Grade II listed cinema closed for refurbishment just as the Covid-19 pandemic hit and is due to reopen in September 2022. A community fundraising drive to pay for renovations has already raised about £35,000 and has a target of £40,000 by Christmas Eve. The money donated will sponsor the cinema's famous gas lamps and help with upkeep of the Grade II listed lamppost outside the front door. {1836}

BBC News website – 24 December; see also Newsreel p10

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

ALTON (Hants)

In the first week, 1,255 people signed a petition to keep the Palace open. It faces closure next September if a buyer is not found. See p21 Bulletin 55/5 & Casework p5. {24101}

Haslemere Herald – 9 December

BANBURY (Oxon)

Fitting out has commenced at the new eight-screen Light cinema at Castle Quay Waterfront, which is set to open early in 2022. Each auditorium is steeply stepped and will have three different types of seats, which include manual reclining seats, electric reclining seats, with a foot rest and bed-style seats, with a foot rest, along the front row. There will also be a 10-lane bowling alley, a restaurant and a terrace bar situated alongside the Oxford Canal.

Banbury Guardian – 9 November

Editor's Note: When I used to pass through Banbury in the 1990s, I'm sure I saw a brown tourist sign for "multiplex cinema" but it never happened. Does anyone else remember this?

BELFAST



The Royal Institute of the Architects of Ireland (RIAI) has today awarded the RIAI Gold Medal (2010-2012) to O'Donnell + Tuomey, for the Lyric Theatre. The theatre opened in 2011 and the medal is awarded several years after completion so that the success of the building can be confirmed by the passage of time. The CTA visited in September 2014.

Irish Examiner – 8 December; photo taken September 2014

The thirteen-screen Cineworld opened on 10 December. It includes an IMAX Laser auditorium, a multi-sensory 172-seat 4DX extreme cinema experience, and ScreenX – which is a 270° wrap-around screen. These are the first and only 4DX and ScreenX auditoria in Northern Ireland. It is housed in the former Odyssey, which opened in June 2001 and closed in March 2020. {23589}

Belfast Live – 10 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock

BIRMINGHAM (Central)

Plans have been revealed to reopen the Electric in Station Street, which announced earlier this year that it would not reopen under the same management, having been closed since the start of the pandemic. The operator of the Picture House in Uckfield (East Sussex) was aiming to reopen the venue in time for Christmas. See photo front cover Bulletin 55/4. {9559}

BBC News website – 2 November; Birmingham Mail – 6 November; also sent in by Ken Roe



The 345-seat former Giant Screen at Millennium Point opened again to screen *Rocketman* on 13 November and *Love Actually* on 5 December. Tickets were £31.95 and included five glasses of themed wine, served during the film. The venue can also be hired for parties. It also hosted the Birmingham Film Festival from 19-28 November. It opened as the IMAX in September 2001 but closed in December 2003. It was mothballed and reopened between October 2011 and January 2015. {24154}

msn.com – 4 November; photo taken April 2007

BLACKBURN (Lancs)

A business plan for a £9.3m redevelopment of the Exchange has been launched. "The build would provide shared facilities for people of all races and religions and for charities, agencies and public bodies to work together. The main hall upstairs is a fantastic arts space to use cultural activities to bring health and wellbeing, economic benefits and social change in the heart of our town centre." The 1865 building was used as a cinema from 1918 to 2005. {24035}

Insider Media – 18 November; sent in by Eric Nolan

BLUEWATER (Kent)

The Showcase Cinema de Lux is having a refurbishment. The project will include luxury recliner seating in the original thirteen screens, matching the four screens that were added in 2018. The cinema will remain open during the works, which are due to be completed in spring. {24663}

Gravesend Messenger – 7 October

BRIDLINGTON (East Yorks)

An independent operator has reopened the bingo club in the former Regal and renamed it the Regal Bingo Club. {3224}

Sent in by Ken Roe

BRIGHTON

The Grade II* listed Hippodrome is having its roof replaced. Workers can now begin to repair the ceiling before removing the defective roof coverings. This is the latest stage in the restoration, which began last year. {36884}

The Argus, Brighton – 25 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

BRISTOL

We reported on p18 of the last Bulletin of plans to demolish the former Broadway in Filwood Park. Now the chair of Filwood Residents' Association says he is "prepared to go into the building and sit there and squat until somebody sees a bit of sense." {47281}

B24/7 – 1 December

BURTON UPON TRENT (Staffs)

The ground floor of the Grade II listed former Ritz is to become an over-21s bar; the official opening date is yet to be announced. It comes two years after the cat café previously using the ground floor closed down. The upstairs is used as a function suite. The Ritz opened in March 1935 and became the Gaumont in February 1957. It was renamed Odeon in November 1966 and was tripled in April 1974. It was the Robins Cinema between 1996 and December 1999. {22126}

Staffordshire Live – 20 December



CANTERBURY (Kent)



The Odeon Canterbury (ex Regal/ABC), is still closed and is/was being used as a Covid-19 vaccination centre using screen ② lobby as a waiting room and the former Costa Café and paybox as the vaccination and recovery area. Apparently repairs to the roof are ongoing. Staff may not go upstairs, which is unsafe due to roof damage, hence the extensive scaffolding. The intention is to reopen next year as a twin cinema again but Costa will not return and the signage will go. See Miscellany p(Ref). {15034}

Sent in by Ken Roe & Martin Tapsell; photo taken September 2021

CARMARTHEN



A new film *Save The Cinema* tells the story of the fight to save the Lyric when it was threatened with demolition in 1993. Full details were printed on p21 of Bulletins 55/2 and p31 of Bulletin 55/3. The film was shot in 2.35:1 CinemaScope ratio with stereo sound. It was due to be premiered on Sky Cinema on 14 January and also to receive a theatrical release; it is already available on streaming services. You can view the trailer at youtu.be/dG9Qfab6Z2s and details at tinyurl.com/2p8djaxw. {26588}

Digital Spy – 6 December; sent in by John West; photo taken April 2010

COALVILLE (Leics)

The leader of North West Leicestershire District Council has said that plans to deliver a cinema are still on, despite the town missing out on vital funds for the project. Known as the Lyceum, the £9m proposal would have become a skills and arts facility that could host concerts, dance events, films, exhibitions and conferences. Locations being considered include the former Rex; its original proposed location in the redeveloped Belvoir shopping centre has been ruled out. However, a bar in the centre that has been forced to close is also looking at the Rex for its new home. The Rex opened in February 1938 and was twinned in May 1973. Films ceased in May 1984 and the ground floor was used as a Dunelm store until June 2016; apparently the circle seating still remains in situ. {23119}

Leicestershire Live – 18, 19 November

COLCHESTER (Essex)

Cineworld has finally signed on the dotted line to operate a twelve-screen cinema at the Northern Gateway Leisure Park. It will have Superscreen and 4DX capabilities. Construction was expected to start early in 2022.

Basildon, Canvey Island & Southend Echo – 1 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

DAVENTRY (Northants)

The scheduled Christmas opening of the new four-screen Arc cinema has been delayed again. The contractor has been attempting to remedy defects in the ceiling support system. The revised opening date has been set for March. See p22 Bulletin 55/5.

Northants Live – 13 November; Daventry Express – 18 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

DEAL (Kent)



Deal Nightclub Ltd of Dover, which has operated in the former Odeon since 2015, is changing the former Flicks cinema area on the rear upper floor into a Snooker Pool Club, which previously was located nearest the street. The original twin cinema entrance will be reinstated to access this. {15022}

Licensing application – sent in by Martin Tapsell; photo taken April 2008

DUDLEY

The Duchess of Beaufort and the Earl of Dudley – whose ancestors donated the land on which the Hippodrome was built – both lodged strong objections to its planned demolition. However, the Council voted by a majority to proceed with the demolition and replace it with a University building. Campaigners called on Michael Gove to intercede but the Secretary of State decided not to intervene. {41631}

The Stage – 21 October; Express and Star – 17, 18 November, 16 December; Daily Mail – 23 November; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & R David Simpson

DUMFRIES

Potential sites are being considered for a new multiplex cinema. The Odeon in the circle area of the former Regal closed in June 2018 although bingo still continues in the former stalls area.

BBC News website – 8 November

EDINBURGH (Portobello)



Plans to demolish the C(s)-listed former George and build flats look set to be rejected for a third time. 55 objections were received against 38 in favour. The proposals would have retained the façade. The cinema opened in March 1939 with 1,284 seats. Films ceased in June 1974 and bingo took over using the stalls only; the circle was blocked off. The CTA visited in September 2008 and were granted access to all areas. Bingo had closed by August 2009 and the building has been empty since. {23292}

Edinburgh Live – 5 December; photo taken September 2008

EGREMONT (Cumbria)

Plans have been submitted for a residential development of four houses on the site of the former **Castle**. The cinema opened in 1922 and films ceased in 1972. It was later used for bingo then snooker and was demolished in 2007. Plans for 15 flats came to naught. {50897}

*Whitehaven News – 17 November; News & Star – 20 November;
sent in by Terry Hanstock*

GLYNDEBOURNE (near Lewes, East Sussex)

Glyndebourne Opera House presented Charles Chaplin's 1931 'silent' *City Lights* at two late afternoon performances on Friday 19 and Saturday 20 November. Jamie Phillips conducted a full orchestra in the pit for the digital presentation on a large screen filling the proscenium arch. Ushers believed this was the first such film screening here.

Sent in by Allen Eyles

GRAVESEND (Kent)

Plans to turn the former **Majestic** into flats were deferred by the Council. The cinema opened in October 1931 and was renamed **ABC** in 1963. It was tripled in 1972 and closed in 2002 as the **EMD**. It was taken over by the controversial United Church of the Kingdom of God but they moved out in 2006. In 2009 there was a major fire and the auditorium was demolished, leaving only the façade. The deferred plans would see a nine-storey building where the auditorium once was and the remaining frontage would become six flats with a 'work hub' on the ground floor. None of the housing would be 'affordable'. {37337}



Gravesend Messenger – 4 November; photo taken April 2004

GRAYS (Essex)

We reported on p23 of Bulletin 55/5 of plans to sell off the **Tameside Theatre**. Now the Council is suggesting relocating the library and registry office to a new Civic building with the possibility of allowing a community group to take over the theatre.

Thurrock Gazette – 12 November

HANLEY (Stoke-on-Trent)



Plans have been announced to demolish part (possibly the auditorium?) of the former **Odeon** to build flats. It opened in February 1938 and closed in November 1975. It was later used for storage and then as a **Chicago Rock Café**. The building has been empty for some time. {44157}

Sent in by Ken Roe; photo taken July 2005

HARWICH (Essex)

The Grade II* listed **Electric Palace** has been given a grant of £151,291 by Historic England to help restore flooring that is creating "serious damp issues". The venue previously had asbestos removed and its roof stabilised. The restoration programme will also see the auditorium redecorated and the electrical system replaced. {2597}

*BBC News website – 23 October; Essex County Standard – 12 November;
sent in by Terry Hanstock*

Editor's Note: We hope to have more detailed information next Bulletin.

HOYLAKE (Wirral)

The project to overhaul the **Town Hall** is still going ahead, despite the "huge disruption" caused by the pandemic. An application for a £3.6m grant from the Government's Coastal Communities Fund has been successful. Once complete, **The Beacon** will feature a two-screen cinema, a restaurant, bar and café. No time scale has been given.

Liverpool Echo – 7 November

ILKESTON (Derbys)

Plans have been drawn up to refurbish three retail units in the side of the Grade II listed former **Ritz**. The cinema opened in May 1938 and films ceased in June 1968. It became a bingo club, which closed in July 2018. The CTA visited in May 2008. The empty building has suffered from break-ins and vandalism. See Casework p5. {22173}

Derby Telegraph – 27 October

INVERGORDON (Highland)



Officials have recommended that the Council sell or lease the Category B-listed former **Town Hall**. However, they have also warned that the building is in a poor state of repair and would require several hundred thousand pounds of restoration work. It was built in 1871 and converted to a cinema in 1934, which opened as the **Playhouse**. It went over to part-time bingo from 1960 and films ceased in April 1984. In 1988 it was converted into an arts centre. {23258}

Press & Journal, Highlands & Islands – 17 November; photo taken September 2008

KESWICK (Cumbria)

The **Alhambra** has been awarded a grant from the Government's Cultural Recovery Fund. The £86,782 will go towards the recent £300,000 upgrade to the family-run venue, which delayed its reopening post-lockdown and was described at the time as a "massive gamble" This included a 29-seat second screen under the balcony. The cinema reopened on 15 October. {3150}

BBC News website – 19 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

KETTERING (Northants)



Plans have been submitted to convert the former **Granada** into a food hall. It opened in December 1936 with 1,748 seats in stalls and circle. Films ceased in June 1974 and it became a bingo club the following year. That closed in June 2018 with plans to convert it into a banqueting hall. In June 2019 police found a huge cannabis factory in the building. {35251}

Northants Live – 26 October; photo taken April 2007

LEEDS (West Yorks)

Workmen restoring the Hyde Park Picture House pulled up carpets and floorboards and found old cigarette packets, confectionary, coins, 'reserved' signs and film boxes from the 1930s and 40s. There was also a 'mummified' banana and a box of Kodak 127 film. See also article on p6. {1836}

BBC News website – 8 November;
Yorkshire Evening Post – 12 November

LONDON (Camden)

The new five-screen Curzon opened on 29 October at Hawley Wharf, Dockray Place, a new development beside the Regent's Canal. Each screen has 28 or 30 seats. They are all upstairs and appear to be directly beneath the Overground railway. There is definitely noise when heavily-laden freight trains rumble by overhead (which they do frequently). As usual there is absolutely no indication of what is on and when until you reach the Box Office counter, where there are two small framed cards. Admission is £17 peak (evenings & weekends) and £12.50 at other times. Concessions £12. Children £10 (off-peak only). I [AW] don't think it poses a threat to the Odeon Camden Town, which has larger screens and lower prices. {66147}

Kentish Towner – 4 November; Sent in by Jeremy Buck, Terry Hanstock & Anthony Wills;
Time Out - 9 November; sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Covent Garden)

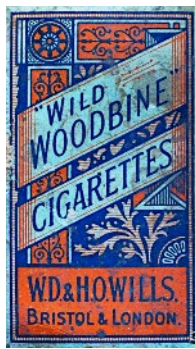


The future of the Grade II listed four-screen Odeon Covent Garden may be in doubt after the building was purchased by an investment fund for an undisclosed fee, rumoured to be in excess of £75m. It opened as the Saville Theatre in October 1931 with a 129-foot bas-relief frieze by Gilbert Bayes. It became a two-screen ABC cinema in December 1970 and was taken over by Odeon in 2000. It was further subdivided in 2001. {911}

Camden New Journal, The Stage – 11 November;
sent in by Tom Laughlan & R David Simpson; photo taken September 2006

LONDON (Mile End)

The five-screen Genesis has won the *Time Out* best cinema award for 2021. It has been renovated over the last two years and tickets are



just £5.50. The building opened as the Empire in June 1939 and became the ABC Mile End. It was tripled in 1973 and closed in March 1989. It lay empty for about ten years until reopened as a five-screen cinema in May 1999. The original circle area still remains the main screen, with the two former minis under the circle in the rear stalls and a further two screens added in the former front stalls. {13867}

Time Out – 7 December; sent in by Tom Laughlan; photo taken April 2006

LONDON (Southwark)

The new two-screen Everyman opened on 13 December at Borough Yards, Dirty Street, a new retail and leisure development next to Borough Market. The screens seat 105 and 92.

Sent in by Jeremy Buck

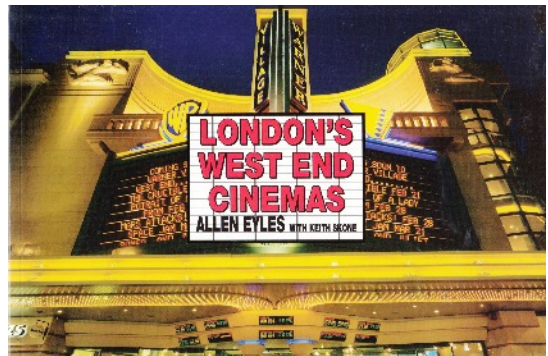
LONDON (Streatham)

The Grade II listed Streatham Hill Theatre has been added to the English Heritage national 'at risk' register. It opened in November 1929 with 3,000 seats, one of the largest theatres in the suburbs of London. In the late 1930s films were shown on Sundays, when theatrical performances were not permitted. It received a hit from a wartime bomb in July 1944 but was restored and reopened in December 1950. It closed in June 1962 and was converted for bingo. That closed in January 2017 and the building has been empty since, expect for an amusement arcade in part of the foyer. {31611}

Friends of SHT press release – 4 November

Three more pages of Newsreel in the full Bulletin

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 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 p4

LETTERS

UNIDENTIFIED CELEBRITY

The lady pictured in between the two Scottish gentlemen on p29 of the last Bulletin is Sylvia Syms.

Les Woods

I can't identify the two celebrities on p29 of the November/December Bulletin although one of them resembles Hannah Gordon. Judging by the wearing of the kilt, it could be a Burns Night / St Andrew's Day celebration. However, I have been able to glean some information on the cinema manager, William McLarty (Maybole, Ayrshire 1925-1986 Hamilton, Lanarkshire). From 1947 to 1950 he was one of the two assistant managers at the **Regal** Hamilton, occasionally acting as relief manager at the Rex Cinema Motherwell. In 1949 he was presented with a "very handsome clock" by the Rex's management and staff on the occasion of his marriage. In 1950 he became manager of the Ritz Cambuslang, before moving to the **Regal** Hamilton in 1952, remaining there as manager for the rest of his career. As a member of The Kinematograph Weekly Guild of Showmen, he appears to have been an enthusiastic promoter of the Regal's films and in 1958 he was "Highly Commended" in that year's MGM Showmanship Contest. That particular bit of showmanship involved buglers sounding a fanfare prior to each evening's screening of *Dunkirk* (1958).

Terry Hanstock

SOUTHAMPTON SITUATION

The **Empire Theatre** in Southampton, which was opened in December 1928, was the tallest building in the City at the time. However, it was soon eclipsed by the nearby taller **Civic Centre**. Eventually it was acquired by the Rank Organisation, which renamed it the **Gaumont**. Although built as a theatre on three levels, it became a full-time cinema. However, the stage facilities were retained and the building was sometimes used for live performances. Local amateur companies kept the building going for years despite attempts since at least 1961 by Rank to turn the building into a bingo hall. The local 'Friends of the Gaumont' were for many years active as a pressure group. In 1985 Rank sold the building, which was renamed **Mayflower**. It is noticeable that no local amateur company has performed in the building since that date. The building was closed on the outbreak of the virus.

The **Nuffield Theatre** in the Southampton University campus was opened by Dame Sybil Thorndike in March 1964. Although on the University campus, it was open for all. The theatre closed on the outbreak of the virus. The £30 million **Studio 144** opened in Above Bar in February 2018 and became known as **NFT City** with the **Nuffield** at the University known as **Nuffield Campus**. It went into liquidation at the outbreak of the virus. A Trust has now been formed to operate both the former **Mayflower** and the **NFT City**. The Above Bar premises are now called **Mast Mayflower Studios** and the **Mayflower** in **Commercial Road** is called **Mayflower Theatre**. Both premises advertise together. Telephone booking is the only way to book at the moment. The former **Nuffield** in the University Campus is currently empty and its future is at present undecided.

Ian Patterson

EMPIRE/ODEON SUTTON COLDFIELD

As members will know this is an ex-Odeon and Grade II listed. It was the first of the Odeons to be tripled in 1972 with a fourth screen being added in 1987 but several years ago it became part of the Empire chain. Regrettably, since Empire took over it appears to have been sadly neglected to some extent. It has become rather shabby in parts with ripped seats in the rear of screen ④ and screens ② and ③ looking rather sad. I once asked the manager why they did not use screen tabs / masking and was told that none of the staff knew how to operate them. On another occasion, during the steaming of an André Rieu concert, the picture did not fit the screen and at the interval the house lights were left on for about ten minutes after the start of the performance and at the end the house lights were not put on, leaving the audience stumbling around in the dark to the exit. Perhaps with more staff training and better maintenance over the years the present problems would not have arisen. These are just my thought and perhaps I am wrong as I have never worked in a cinema and stand to be corrected if I have misjudged the Empire group. {15012}

Trevor Chapman

LEATHER BOTTLE



A few years ago, I and two fellow CTA members visited the site where Merton Park Studios once stood, following which we adjourned to the adjacent pub, the *Leather Bottle*. As this had been the watering hole for many of the stars and technicians from the studios, we were disappointed to find no mention or photographs in the pub of its once famous neighbour. This omission has finally been rectified by Clive Whichelow, author of *The Films of Merton Park Studios*. Pub owners Greene King have allowed him to put up a small but eye-catching display, which he hopes to extend in due course. To order a copy of *The Films of Merton Park Studios*, which costs £9.99 plus postage, go to enigmapublishing.co.uk.

Kevin Wheelan

DOROTHY LLANGOLLEN

There's a very thorough account of the **Dorothy Cinema**, Llangollen (1931-1965) and its owners, the Horspool family, by Dave Edwards on the Wrexham History website at tinyurl.com/2p8j5fpu.

Apparently the Horspools also owned the **Dorothy Café** as well as the **Dorothy Bakery**, which might explain how the **Dorothy Cinema** acquired its name. However, there were **Dorothy Cafés** in many towns and cities as early as the 1880s so the name wasn't peculiar to Llangollen. All seem to be fairly upmarket establishments but whether they were part of a chain or an early franchise is difficult to say. The 1880s also saw 'Dorothy' fur capes and mantles being widely advertised, which suggests that the name was popular in marketing terms. A subject for further research? {32675}

Terry Hanstock

TIME PLEASE

I'm sure someone has already pointed this out but London had a **Time** cinema – a news theatre (John Holloway's letter: *Australia Time*, page 13 Bulletin 55/5). It's chronicled in Allen's *West End Cinemas* and formed part of Baker Street Underground station to face Marylebone Road. The cinema existed between 1938 and 1999, under various permutations of the name **Time** as well as others. {13070}

Richard Gray

GOOD DEAL?

Stefanie Fischer's talk gave examples of new digital cinemas created inside buildings no longer wanted. The day before, I heard from Barclays that my Deal branch was closing in February. I wrote to them suggesting it be used for a two-screen cinema. The campaign to reopen the **Regent** is I think a lost cause due to advanced decay and the owners never engaging or enthusing about their plans (if any). I don't know if any other CTA members have advocated new cinemas where other options are closed but with depleted High Streets, this seems a relevant issue for more adaptable CTA members. Any thoughts on this?

Martin Tapsell

Two more pages of letters
in the full Bulletin

WHAT'S IN A NAME (BADGE)

By Mike Whitcombe

The one item of uniform every cinema worker can be guaranteed to lose is their name badge. Being a small item, which rarely stays secured to your top (nowadays a unisex T-shirt), it can disappear quicker than a child can spill a carton of popcorn, particularly while moving stock or cleaning a screen. And, being small, when you remove it from your top it invariably disappears, leading to a reprimand from a manager who is convinced the company will go into liquidation should he be forced to order another.

Many colleagues I worked with disliked wearing their name badge. I personally never minded wearing the logo of the cinema chain I worked for but I would shake my head when a complaining patron would look at my badge and then ask if I worked at the cinema. Worse, though, was when a self-opinionated customer would look at your name badge and then call you by your first name, most often with a condescending sneer that always ensured I wouldn't be helpful.



Considering the amount of name badges that were lost, I was surprised the other day when I came across some of the ones I wore during my twenty year cinema career. My first full-time cinema job was in 1989 when I was employed at the Cannon Portsmouth. I already had cinema experience, having worked at an independent, radical art house cinema where name badges were considered as abhorrent as fascism. Soon after joining Cannon, staff uniforms were phased out (yet another cost-cutting exercise) and our name badge, pinned to our white shirts, which we had to pay for ourselves, marked us as cinema employees and not cinema patrons (as we still quaintly called them).

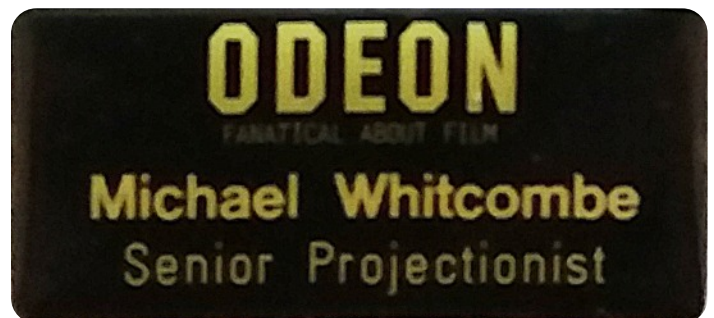


When MGM assumed control of the Cannon circuit, we were all looking forward to the MGM logo, complete with Leo the Lion, on the front of the building. That never happened (the Cannon signage stubbornly remained throughout MGM's ownership) but we did immediately receive a MGM name badge. It might seem silly now but it felt quite an honour to wear the badge of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, once the most famous movie studio in Hollywood which, in its heyday, boasted "More stars than there are in Heaven!"

Virgin were our next owners but we never received a name badge with their logo, mainly because Richard Branson only wanted multiplexes on his portfolio and sold the traditional High Street cinemas that made up the bulk of the MGM circuit with indecent haste. This meant our new name badges contained the famous ABC triangle, following Barry Jenkins' relaunch of ABC, which had ceased to exist when Cannon purchased EMI.



When Odeon absorbed ABC at the turn of the Millennium, I was asked to transfer to the Odeon Portsmouth. At first I was given a turquoise coloured badge with my name only. Soon after, I was given one which contained the Odeon logo, my name and what was meant to be the name of my favourite film – quite clearly a gag dreamt up by a bored executive at Head Office with time on his hands. Most staff went for a recent blockbuster, which I think was meant to be the idea. I, however, actually chose my favourite film, the 1934 screwball comedy *It Happened One Night*, recently voted by critics as the best rom-com of all time. More importantly, at the 1935 Oscars it became the first film to win all five major Academy Awards: Best Picture; Best Director (Frank Capra); Best Actor (Clark Gable); Best Actress (Claudette Colbert); and Best Adapted Screenplay (Robert Riskin, who used his communist beliefs to show equality will lead to happiness, a plot point that directly led to the movie capturing the imagination of a depression-hit America).



Unfortunately, the movie wasn't modern enough for our manager, who ordered me a new badge, this time with the name of my job in place of the so-called favourite film. This was the badge I then wore until the site closed and we were all made redundant in January 2008. The iconic Odeon lettering, familiar to so many generations of movie goers, along with Odeon's then tag line, 'Fanatical About film,' certainly gives this badge a touch of distinction. However, as I've always thought that the ABC triangle and the MGM motif are the two most attractive logos in the cinema world, it's difficult to say which one of the many badges I wore is my favourite. Perhaps it's probably best not to choose a favourite but to instead look fondly at the number of iconic cinema names I was lucky to work for during twenty eventful – and entertaining – years.

