



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

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May / June 2022



The Palace Devizes in August 2003 – see Newsreel p26.



The Phoenix East Finchley in April 2006. We shall be holding our AGM there on 2 July – see p3.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Thank you for continuing to send in stuff for the Bulletin. I could do with another article or two for next time. I have a few UK holiday snaps in stock – I haven't got any overseas ones but I suppose trips abroad have not been easy during the pandemic. However, with things easing, I look forward to receiving some from foreign parts. Can I also please ask again for you not to cut dates off press cuttings – or at least write the date in the margin. It makes them more relevant.

Whilst compiling the Cinema Business section on p23 I noticed that different reports often give different figures for takings, admissions, profit/loss etc. I can only repeat the information I receive so please remember that, like many things, it is soon out of date.

I have had to slightly change the order of some sections in this issue, in order to make consecutive pages available for double-page articles. I don't think you'll have any trouble in finding things. I do hate magazines where you get halfway through a piece, then it says "continued on page ..."

I'm sorry I won't be able to be with you at the AGM on 2 July (see panel on p3) as I shall be busy compiling your next Bulletin, which has to go to the printers on Monday 4 July. Please note the deadline date below.

I had a chuckle at a Freudian slip I made whilst typing the item about an autograph book going to auction in the Miscellany on p22. One of the stars who signed it was Dusty Springfield but instead of typing a 'D' for her first initial, I typed a 'B' – work it out for yourselves!

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor

CARTOON CORNER



From ABC Film Review; sent in by Ben Doman

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

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE
MONDAY 20 JUNE

CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of cinema buildings

Company limited by guarantee. Reg. No. 04428776.

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

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

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

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

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

Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby

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

VISITS AND EVENTS

An Archival Day at the Seaside

Saturday 25 June;

organised by David Simpson and Clive Polden



The building that houses the CTA Archive

The CTA Archive moved to its present location in March 2019. With twice as much space as before, it has been possible to get all our lovely memorabilia out of its bags and boxes and put it on display, where it belongs. This has resulted in some very eye-catching displays, which have considerably enhanced the traditional 'information' side of the Archive. As March 2020 approached, with the work well under way, we were gearing up for the 'official' CTA visit – when the pandemic hit! The only good news is that the enforced delay meant that the work has now been completed, so all our wonderful memorabilia is now on view: and what displays they are! So we are delighted to invite you to join us as we open up the Archive for this very first 'official' visit!



The Palace Theatre Westcliff-on-Sea

But this is not all! The day will include a visit to the Grade II-listed **Palace Theatre** in nearby Westcliff and a photo-stop at the former **Plaza** in the Southend suburb of Southchurch. You will also have time for a lunch break and a pleasant stroll along Southend's 'Golden Mile'!

Getting there: Those travelling by car should park at the Archive (Unit 1, Millhead Way, Purdey's Industrial Estate, Rochford, SS4 1LB: Just look for the **ODEON** signage!) where our coach will pick up at 10:15am (and where a comfort break may be taken!).

In the current timetable, those travelling by rail are asked to catch the 10:00am 'CTA Special'(!) from London Fenchurch Street (which, amongst other stops, picks up at West Ham, with its Jubilee Line interchange, at 10:09am). This is due to arrive at Westcliff station at 10:52am, where our coach will pick you up. We will then go to the nearby **Palace Theatre** for a full tour and a welcome refreshment break.

We will then head to the sea front for our lunch break (own arrangements: there are one or two eateries!!) Afterwards we will take a look at the former **Plaza Cinema** before heading to the Archive, where the archivist, Clive Polden, will conduct guided tours and you can also have a leisurely browse around our impressive displays. We will also have an extensive range of second-hand books, magazines and other items for sale.

Late afternoon, around 5:00-5:30pm, our coach will return to Westcliff station for those heading straight back to London and, for those who want to stay on a little longer, to Southend sea front. (If you are intending staying on, please purchase a return ticket to Southend Central station when you join the train in the morning. That station is half way up the High Street, directly north of the Pier). Those travelling by car who wish to stay on will need to drive to the sea front.

Enquiries to: David Simpson on 01702 464733 or 07754 391163.

BOOKING YOUR TICKET

Members and their guests £20 (includes coach, driver's gratuity, visit notes and refreshments at the **Palace Theatre** and the Archive). Early booking is advisable, as we are only hiring one coach.



Booking can be done on-line using TicketSource: www.ticketsource.co.uk. Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre Association' into their Search Box.
OR by post to David Simpson, 399 Woodgrange Drive, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 3DY.

(Cheque payable to 'The Cinema Theatre Association'. Please include a phone number and either SAE or an e-mail address.)
All bookings will be acknowledged.

CTA Annual General Meeting

Saturday 2 July at 11:00am (doors open 10:30am)

Phoenix Cinema, 52 High Road, East Finchley, London, N2 9PJ. Organised by Ken Roe.

The AGM of the Cinema Theatre Association will be held at the historic **Phoenix Cinema**, East Finchley, commencing at 11:00am. All members are invited to attend; admission is free. Nominations for committee members are invited and should be sent to CTA Secretary Adam Unger (address on Page 2 of this Bulletin) to arrive seven days before the meeting. The minutes of last year's AGM ZOOM meeting will be available in the members' area of the CTA website from 30 May and will also be available on the day. The accounts are on p31.

The 548-seat **Phoenix Cinema** was opened on 11 May 1912 as the **East Finchley Picturedrome**. The screen was at the front end of the building, behind its Moorish style façade. In 1938 it was modernised in an Art Deco style and the screen was placed in its current position at the rear end of the building. Decorative panels in Art Deco style by interior designers Mollo & Egan adorn the auditorium side walls. The original barrel-vaulted ceiling from 1912 survives. It has undergone a couple of name changes over the years: **Coliseum Cinema**, **Rex Cinema**. It is a Grade II Listed building. Plans are proposed to convert the first-floor café/bar above the main foyer into a second screen.

Time permitting after the AGM it is hoped to screen a rare 35mm reel of advertisements and trailers, recently found in a rusty tin box at the **Rio Cinema**, Dalston, which date back to the days when it operated as the **Tatler Cinema Club**. Plus (again time permitting) a short documentary produced by Hoyts Cinemas, *Australia Guests in Our House* promoting how to run a successful cinema in the 1950s. The projection room of the **Phoenix Cinema** will also be available for inspection.

Following our exit from the **Phoenix**, we will take the Northern Line Tube two stops from East Finchley to Archway, where we will either walk or take a #271 bus along Holloway Road to look at the recently refurbished foyer of the **Odeon Luxe Holloway** (formerly the **Gaumont Holloway**, which opened in 1938 with 3,006-seats, façade & foyers Listed Grade II, architect Charles Howard Crane from the USA) which has been returned to its original appearance by removing Screen ②, which occupied the former 220-seat café/restaurant area. Then it will be time to refresh ourselves at Wetherspoon's **Coronet** pub (the former **Savoy/ABC** of 1940, which had 1,826-seats, architect William Riddell Glen), which is a short walk down the Holloway Road

Getting there: East Finchley Tube station is in Zone 3 on the High Barnet branch of the Northern Line. Walk left out of the station and the **Phoenix Cinema** is just a couple of minutes' walk along the High Road, on the other side of the road.

Leaving Holloway: When you leave the Wetherspoon's **Coronet**, turn left out of the building and it is a short walk to Holloway Road (Piccadilly Line) Tube station in Zone 2, on the other side of the road.

Save the Cinema screening

at the **Regent Christchurch, Dorset;**

Friday 15 July at 3:00pm (Doors open at 2:30pm).

Organised by CTA Wessex.

The CTA committee was keen for members to get a chance to see the above-mentioned film, as it has had a limited theatrical release to date. We have arranged for the Regent Christchurch to screen this film for the CTA and public and are doing this the day before the Renown Films / Talking Pictures event, which is happening over 16 & 17 July at the Regent. There wasn't a huge response from members for a larger Dorset-wide trip at this time but, as we are getting over the Covid situation, perhaps this can be postponed.



The auditorium of the Regent Christchurch

It may be that CTA members are coming to the Talking Pictures event, so by extending their stay they can get a chance to see *Save the Cinema* on Friday 15 July. We hope to run a newsreel before the film and can organise a tour of the Regent when the screening ends.

For those who will be in the area, I'm looking to organise a walking tour of the remaining cinema buildings in Bournemouth town centre on the morning of Friday 15 July, between 11:00 and 13:00. It will no doubt be exteriors but interesting, as Bournemouth still retains much of its cinema heritage at the moment.

In order that I have a list of those members attending the Regent screening and the morning Bournemouth walking tour, please email me by 15 June for meeting up details at the following address:

David Eve – email: evcinema@talk21.com Mobile: 07717793909.

(For those that have already confirmed they are coming, thanks very much.)

Please note: Booking for *Save the Cinema* should be done directly with the Regent Centre www.regentcentre.co.uk Box office 01202 499199; The Regent: 51 High Street, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 1AS.

Tickets for the Talking Pictures Event must be booked in advance via the Talking Pictures website www.renownfilms.co.uk – see next column.

Coming Soon

Here are provisional details of some 'in person' events planned for the remainder of the year:

August OR September Projected Picture Trust [PPT] collection at Dean Clough Mills, Halifax. Plus: Regal, Picture House, Odeon, Theatre Royal, Playhouse and Civic [former Victoria Theatre] in Halifax.

October Plaza Stockport to celebrate 90th Anniversary of opening on 7 October 1932. Plus: Rex Wilmslow, Savoy Heaton Moor and possibly Buxton Opera House. Probably a weekend visit.

Late October OR November IMAX Science Museum, South Kensington. Plus: Picture House (ex Forum) Fulham Road and Everyman (on the site of the Classic / Kings Road Theatre).

November Alan Baxter's Gallery, Farringdon. A cinema music presentation entitled *When Cinema Let In The Light, Part 2 – The Organist Entertains* by Martin Cleave.

December Christmas Party – date to be fixed

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

(not) organised by the CTA

London Film Fairs

Sunday 19 June & Sunday 11 September

Royal National Hotel, Bedford Way, London WC1H 0DG

The conventions presents dealers from all over the UK, Europe, US, Canada, Australia and South America that specialise in vintage and modern film memorabilia. Items cover the history of cinema from the silents to present day blockbusters. londonfilmconvention.co.uk

Talking Pictures Weekend at the Regent Christchurch

Sat 16 / Sun 17 July 10:30am – 7pm

Celebrity guests, newsreels, short films, lost feature films projected from 35mm, quizzes, stalls, music and interviews with the stars on stage – plus meet the stars, browse the stalls and some very special exclusive show deals all weekend! www.renownfilms.co.uk

Tickets: £50 for the whole weekend, £30 for one day.

Exhibition: Wonderland – Birmingham's Cinema Stories

Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, Chamberlain Square, B3 3DH

Open now until 28 October, free admission, daily 10-5.

Wonderland will explore how cinema has shaped the streets, social lives and dreams of Brummies over the past 125 years. The display will showcase unseen photographs and cinema memorabilia, alongside historic magic lanterns and optical toys from Birmingham's Collection. A unique 3D map created by SpacePlay will set the scene for a treasure hunt across the City and visitors can get involved by sharing their own cinema-going memories, watch film screenings or take part in drop-in activities. More information: flatpackfestival.org.uk/projects/wonderland

Associated with this is the *Flatpack Film Festival*, from 18 May to 22 May, which includes film screenings, a walk around Birmingham's cinema sites and a talk on 'Oscar and the Odeons' by Allen Eyles. The article on seating on p16 was produced as part of this project.

CTA's Virtual Talks

CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE YOUR SKILLS?

Many of you have now enjoyed our varied programme of virtual talks and presentations on the CTA's Zoom channel. Our audience interest and support is expanding and we are looking forward to arranging more talks but to achieve this we need to enlarge our small friendly support team.

If you are enthusiastic and would like to volunteer your technical, digital or other skills, please do get in touch, particularly if you can assist in any following areas – we'd love to hear from you:

- ▶ Talks programming
- ▶ Introducing a talk programme on-line
- ▶ Video production and editing
- ▶ On location video camera recording
- ▶ Familiarity with Zoom operations
- ▶ Familiarity with On-line Ticketing systems



INVITATION TO PRESENTERS – HERE IS YOUR OPPORTUNITY

As the variety of our cinema related subjects broadens, we would be pleased to receive offers and suggestions for more talks and presentations.

If you have an interesting subject or a story to share with our audience and would like to showcase it on the CTA's Zoom channel, we can help with its production and presentation.

OR – perhaps you have already created and presented your story with images (stills/movies) on social media, YouTube etc, and would like it to be seen by our audience of cinema enthusiasts.

Please contact: Richard Norman

Mobile: 07974 159801 or

Email: RichardNormanCTA@aol.com

CTA VIRTUAL TALKS AND PRESENTATIONS

The Cinemas of Thomas 'Tommy' Thompson

Saturday 21 May at 5:30pm (UK time)
(Zoom talk No 18)

BY PETER HALLINAN

Thomas Thompson was a true pioneer of cinema exhibition in the North-East of England. In 1908, at the age of 40, he gave up his job as a shipping clerk in Hartlepool, rented a hall in Middlesbrough and hired a second-hand projector. Two years later he had bought that hall and also the 3,000-seat Hippodrome in Middlesbrough with its 18-piece orchestra. From then there was no stopping him and during his lifetime he owned 50 cinemas and became a key figure in English cinema exhibition.

Generously illustrated with rare images, this talk will look at how he started, the audience he looked for, his choice of venues and how he made them work as businesses. It will also look at his wider achievements including being a founding member of the Cinema Exhibitors Association, being a frequently outspoken contributor to their deliberations on cinema issues of the day, being a film renter, dabbling in colour films, making films (where his ambition exceeded accomplishment achievement), owning an ice cream factory and being offered a baronetcy (for a price), which he didn't take.

Our presenter, Peter Hallinan, is Thomas Thompson's great-grandson. He'd grown up hearing many family anecdotes and fascinating tales of cinema ownership. After leaving his career as a commercial property lawyer, he began a Master's Degree in Film Studies with Film Archiving at the University of East Anglia. At his interview he shared a few of those family cinema stories. "That's your dissertation", he was told. And so began the search, with fingers crossed, to find out if the reality matched what the family had said. It did, many times over. Peter later worked for a number of years as a film archivist at the Imperial War Museum and has since done a lot more research and created a much-praised website (www.bugandflea.com) as a tribute to his great-grandfather. Book your ticket for this exciting tribute to a true cinema pioneer!



The Palladium Middlesbrough in 1960
(part of the Tommy Thompson circuit)

BOOKING YOUR TICKET

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

Zoom talk starts at 5:30pm (UK time, 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 18)

Hotels with Cinemas – From Le Métropole to Le Paradiso

Saturday 9 July at 5:30pm (UK time)
(Zoom talk No 19)

BY HAROLD MANNING

The concept of a cinema either built into or attached to a hotel is not new. Indeed, the earliest scheme can be traced back to the 1920s and today there is a resurgence of these schemes built and promoted in different guises. These would serve the general public, or as an exclusive service for hotel guests, or even have a dual role.

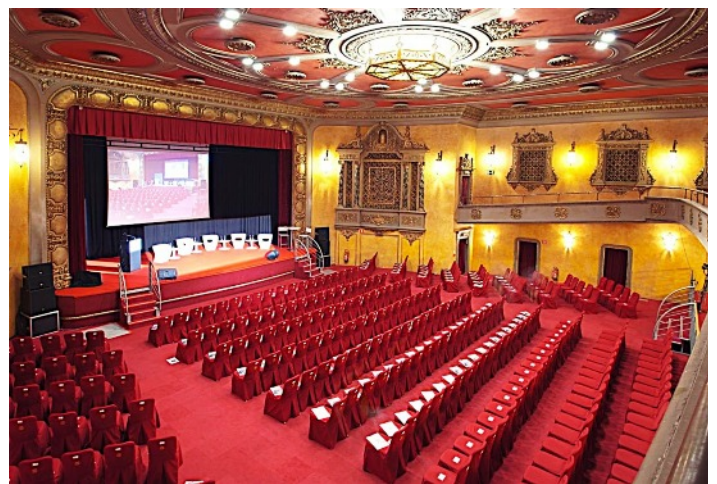
Some stunning architectural designs were created particularly to match the status of the host hotel and this was more prevalent in some European countries with designs for Le Plaza in Brussels (the first hotel-cinema in Europe), or PLM Saint-Jacques in Paris (once the most modern hotel in the world, featuring a 'Jerry Lewis Cinema').

In the UK, probably the most notable was London's Mayfair hotel, where successive conversions turned its lavish ballroom into cabaret space, a theatre and then a cinema – and recently this space has been revived as a conference cinema suite. Several other UK hotel-cinema sites, particularly London's boutique hotel chains, include cinemas.

Our presenter Harold Manning's interest in this novel subject started in 1990 when he discovered Le Métropole (built 1932 with 3,000 seats) in Brussels. "It was just magical," he says and it captured his imagination to research the historical background and interpretation of the cinemas' relationship with its mother hotel. This gem closed in 1994 but fortunately with its architecturally ornate exterior remaining.

This fascinatingly-illustrated talk will cover the historical background and cities such as Paris, Berlin or Madrid and more. Harold will bring us up-to-date with the very latest and impressive Hôtel Paradiso, Paris, operated in the same building as the new MK2 Nation cinema. Harold is planning a publication covering the subject.

English-born Harold currently lives in Paris. He has produced several documentaries and has also been involved with the BFI. He also teaches film criticism, exhibition and distribution at La Fémis and is one of the programmers of L'Alcazar in Asnières near Paris, one of the oldest art-houses in France.



An example: Le Plaza Brussels (1929) converted to a conference venue, retaining its original decorative auditorium

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

Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre Association' into their Search Box. (Talk No 19)

PUBLICATIONS

Second-Hand Book List

These titles were available when this list was prepared but please note there are only single copies of most titles, so a book may have sold out by the time you order. Please add £3.40 to your order for post and packing. Overseas orders – please email sales@cta-uk.org for postal charge, or use credit/debit card.

To order by post: Please send orders to Jeremy Buck, CTA Sales, 34 Pelham Road, London N22 6LN. Please enclose a cheque/postal order payable to Cinema Theatre Association, or send your credit/debit card details, including expiry date and security number.

To order online: please send your order to sales@cta-uk.org Your order will be confirmed and instructions given how to make payment by PayPal.

TITLE	AUTHOR	£
Amber Valley Gazetteer of Greater London Suburban Cinemas 1946-86 (softback, black and white cover)	Malcolm Webb	12
Amber Valley Gazetteer of Greater London Suburban Cinemas 1946-86 (hardback edition, plain red cover)	Malcolm Webb	15
ABC Turnpike Lane 50 years	D Jones K Whelan	1
ABC Mile End the First 100 Years	D Jones K Whelan	1
Ace Rayners Lane 50 Golden Years	Mercia C S	2
A Cinema Near You (Derbyshire)	Ashley Franklin	3
American Picture Palaces (softback)	David Naylor	10
Best Remaining Seats – The Golden Age of the Movie Palace (softback edition)	Ben M Hall	10
Birmingham Cinemas – Films & Stars 1900-60	Victor Price	15
Black Family of Sunderland: Circuits and Cinemas	Frank Manders	2
Boston & Spalding Entertainment	Mervyn Gould	3
British Film Studios An Illustrated History, 2001 edition., signed copy	Patricia Warren	6
Cathedrals of the Movies (hardback)	David Atwell	15
Cathedrals of the Movies (softback)	David Atwell	10
Cinemas of Croydon (1989 edition)	A Eyles K Skone	3
Cinemas of Essex	Bob Grimwood	5
Cinemas of Lincoln	George Clarke	2
Cinemas of the Black Country (1st edition 1982 softback)	Ned Williams	3
Curtains!! New Life for Old Theatres	Various	3
Dream Palaces of Liverpool (1988 edition)	Harold Ackroyd	4
Dream Palaces of Richmond-on-Thames	Fred Windsor	2
Enter the Dream House: South London	ed. M O'Brien	5
Fading Lights Silver Screens (Belfast)	Michael Open	4
Frank Matcham Theatre Architect	Ed. Brian Walker	30
From Grand to Grove: South Bedfordshire	Eddie Grabham	8
Gaumont British Cinemas	Allen Eyles	20
Granada Woolwich: Opening souvenir booklet	Various	5
Harwich Electric Palace	Chris Strachan	10
Kalee Model Eleven Projector – handbook/catalogue 1933	Various	4
Kinema at Kinver	B Parker N Williams	1
London's Suburban Cinemas 1946-80. Mercia Reference Guide	MAF Webb	2
London's West End Cinemas (Hardback 1991)	A Eyles & K Skone	4
London's West End Cinemas (Paperback 1984)	A Eyles & K Skone	3
London's West End Cinemas (Paperback 1991)	A Eyles & K Skone	3
Long-Gone Cinemas of Swale (Kent)	John Clancy	2
Memories of Buckinghamshire Picture Palaces	Martin Tapsell	3
Odeon Muswell Hill: 50th Anniversary programme	Various	7
Picture House in East Anglia	Stephen Peart	3
Picture House Rugeley Golden Jubilee Souvenir	Chris J Ingram	1
Picture Palace & Other Buildings for the Movies	Dennis Sharp	15
Picture Palaces Remembered (Dover, Deal, Folkestone)	J Roy & T Thompson	5
Rotherham's Film Pioneers 1898 to 1911	Stuart Smith	1
Shazam! Regal Cinema, Evesham	Rob Hemming	5
Shepperton Studios – A Personal View	Derek Threadgall	2
Sound Film Projection (1949)	Molloy/Campbell &c	4
Souvenir of Savoy Leyton (Reprint of opening brochure)	n/a	1
Talking Pictures (1932)	Bernard Brown	5
Temples of Dreams: Eastbourne	Peter Hodges	4
Theatres Trust Guide to British Theatres 1750-1950	Various	4
The Projectionist's Handbook (1933)	Pitchford/Coombs	5
West Yorkshire Cinemas & Theatres	Peter Tuffrey	5
York Cinemas	Mervyn Gould	5

Back Numbers Available

PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

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

- Nos 6, 8 – £1.50 each
- Nos 16, 17, 18 – £3.00 each
- Nos 19, 21, 22 – £3.50 each
- Nos 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 – £4.50 each
- No 30 – £5.00
- No 31 – £7.50
- Nos 32, 33, 34, 35 – £5.00 each
- No 36 – £6.00
- Nos 37, 45 – £8.50
- Nos 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46 – £6.00 each

For details of contents, see Bulletin 56/2, or online at www.cta-uk.org/publishing/picture-house

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.

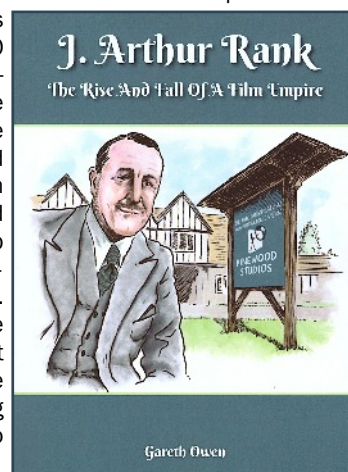
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Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

J Arthur Rank: The Rise and Fall of a Film Empire by Gareth Owen
A5 paperback, 374 pages, illustrated. ISBN 9781629338156.
About £22, from Amazon and other retailers.

J Arthur Rank and the Rank Organisation will chiefly be known to CTA members as the owners of the Odeon and Gaumont cinema circuits from the 1940s until 2000. But there was much more that Rank was involved with, from producing films at Pinewood Studios to film processing and distribution, bingo clubs, holiday camps, hotels and motorway service areas, Hovis bread and Rank-Xerox photocopiers. This interesting book studies most of these areas of operation and includes a complete list of films that Rank produced – some 700 in total. It's not so much a biography of J Arthur, more a study of the businesses that he created. The emphasis is mostly on Pinewood and included are interviews with some of the people who worked there and the story comes right up to the present-day operations – chiefly bingo clubs and casinos. There is not a great deal about the Odeon and Gaumont cinemas but there is much else of interest here and Rank's religious upbringing and generous contributions to charity are also detailed.



HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Tim Hatcher

Grade II* Listed

A meeting is to be convened between interested parties in order to deliberate upon the application for alteration to the **Granada** in Walthamstow, within which proposal several components impact adversely upon original features. The Association will be represented thereat.

Concern has been expressed anent the lack of maintenance to the external signage of the **Dreamland Cinema** in Margate: faults are currently apparent in the illuminated lettering, strip lights and up-lighting units.

Grade II Listed

As an element of the anticipated refurbishment of the **Odeon** in Sutton Coldfield, the CTA is requesting reinstatement of the missing segment which formerly surmounted its characteristic fin.



The rear of the Tower Hull in July 2005, showing the horn chamber

The parlous state of repair exhibited by areas of the horn chamber and guttering of the Tower in Hull has been reported to the Conservation Officer of the City Council. The cinema is currently under refurbishment preparatory to its operation as a music venue.

Scaffolding has been erected adjacent to the front elevation of the **Ritz** in Ilkeston whereat remedial works to the shop units has been initiated. However, the local planning department has been informed of the inadequate protective boarding afforded to the curved fenestration of the balcony staircase's external wall. This has been effected on the interior, thus rendering the glazing vulnerable to damage from without the premises.



The Pyramid Sale in January 2006

An Urgent Works Notice is due to be issued by the local Council requiring that remedial repairs be instigated to the foyer block of the Pyramid in Sale in order to arrest its marked decline into decrepitude.



The Odeon York as the Everyman in June 2020; you can just make out the illuminated 'E'

The attribution of responsibility for maintenance of original signage at the **Odeon** in York remains unresolved: Land Registry records indicate that this feature was excluded from specific reference within the current lease. Liability may thus fall upon the lessor, not the Everyman Media Group plc (the current lessee and operator), notwithstanding the latter company's utilisation of the sign's illuminated letter 'E' as a constituent of its on-site publicity.

Details of unacceptable intended major alterations to the **Curzon** in Mayfair have emerged. The Association is forwarding its objections to the local Conservation Officer, who reportedly does not look favourably upon the proposed scheme. In an additional initiative, the Mayfair Society aspires to secure Asset of Community Value status for the cinema.

Water ingress has caused partial collapse of the ceiling and damage to plasterwork within the currently uninsured **Ritz** in Nuneaton. The impecunious religious organisation which occupies the cinema is intending to relinquish ownership and professes to be in negotiation with a prospective purchaser.

The listing of the **Regal** in Rotherham has resulted in the application to demolish being withdrawn. The local Council is to conduct a feasibility study apropos its potential utilisation as a performing arts centre; the Theatres Trust has been nominated as a consultee, with which organisation the CTA will liaise.

Unlisted

Recent storms have caused further damage to the **Brontë** in Haworth, resulting in risk to the public posed by falling masonry. The owner has avowed an intention of reinstating the parapet following necessary remedial work. As previously reported, the local Council has resiled from its interest in the premises; however, the local Conservation Officer has issued an assurance that the historical significance of the building would be considered if development proposals should arise.

It has been ascertained that solely the café area of the **Plaza** in Hesse remains intact, thus effectively precluding any form of restoration. Therefore it has been suggested to the developer that either the edifice should be converted internally to other purposes or the frontage should be integrated into a comprehensive redevelopment. However, this latter option is unlikely to receive endorsement from the local Council's conservation team, which does not in principle support projects involving 'façadism'.

A local campaign group is attempting to prevent the potential loss of the derelict **Odeon** in Norwich which redevelopment of the area may occasion. Save Britain's Heritage has objected successfully to the plans and a revised scheme in accordance with its views is in formulation.

It transpires that the **Odeon** in Hanley is under threat; evolution of the situation is being monitored.

SCOTTISH CASEWORK

By Gordon Barr & Gary Painter

It's been a while since we last reported on Scottish casework but at the moment our work seems to mostly involve slow, minor updates to the same few cases. Outlined below is the current situation for most of these, mostly tales of developer persistence and authority procrastination, with a wee side of global pandemic!

New Victoria / Odeon, Clerk St, Edinburgh

WILLIAM EDWARD TRENT & JW JORDAN, 1930,
CATEGORY A-LISTED



The New Victoria / Odeon in March 2004 [1]

Closing as a five-screen Odeon in 2003, we then expended much time and energy over the next few years warding off various applications to largely demolish this cinema for flats or student halls. The stage and fly tower (which housed screens ④ & ⑤) were eventually demolished for a small student residence and we got the listing category upgraded from B to A. Various temporary uses came and went (including a rather bizarre, short-lived Las Vegas cabaret venture by the brother of Susan Boyle!) but salvation seemed to come in 2015 when the original developers gave up and sold the building – they evidently enjoyed lengthy planning wrangles as they subsequently became involved in the hugely controversial and ultimately unsuccessful scheme to convert Edinburgh's empty Royal High School into a hotel.

The new owners of the Odeon were Glasgow-based bar and club operator, G1 Group. Permission was granted to restore and reconfigure the auditorium with four screens in the former stalls and one upstairs and work was started, with evidence that the old subdivisions had been stripped from the auditorium. Nothing much appears to have happened of late, partly due to the pandemic but also, we were told, because G1 use their own small in-house team of designers and builders. Having also bought the prestigious Scotsman hotel in Edinburgh (and renaming themselves The Scotsman Group) they were busy bringing that up to scratch, including the insertion of an admittedly lovely boutique cinema screen. As well as a host of pubs and clubs, they also operate the Perth Playhouse and the Glasgow Grosvenor cinemas, although the latter closed just prior to the pandemic for refurbishment and has yet to reopen. The New Vic is one for us to continue to keep an eye on, especially in light of the changed circumstances post-pandemic.

County / George, Portobello

T BOWHILL GIBSON, 1939, CATEGORY C-LISTED

Building consent (20/05799) and planning permission (20/05800) for demolition of the auditorium and its replacement with flats behind a retained façade was refused in January of this year by the City of Edinburgh Council. This application was largely identical to a 2016 application, which was refused by both planners and at appeal. The building had changed hands between both applications but the main difference this time was the submission of an intrusive survey report

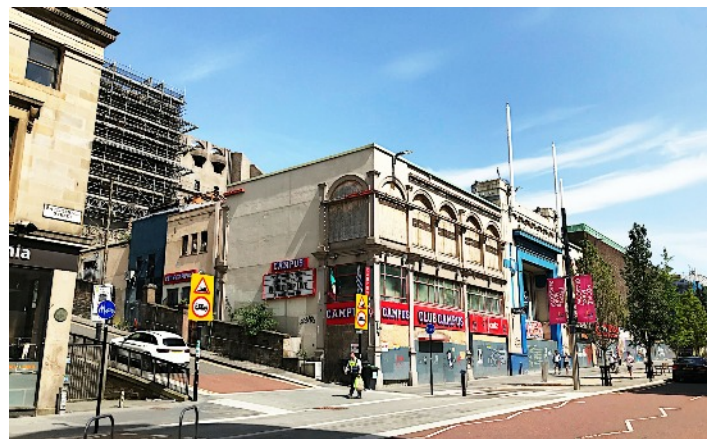


The George Portobello in September 2008 [1]

as evidence that restoration of the auditorium was not viable. Nevertheless, Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and the Council's own consultant engineers considered that enough doubt still remained over the feasibility of restoration for a more sympathetic re-use to warrant refusal. The owners have, predictably, appealed yet again. The flats scheme would have seen the restoration of the truncated glass tower feature that once dominated the façade but would also have entailed additional windows being inserted into this principal elevation. Especially helpful in this case, as in 2016, was the presence of an arts group willing to take the building on and a conservation architect who produced a fully costed survey into a restoration for that use. Although bingo use saw a false ceiling across the stalls, our 2008 visit saw us gain access to the disused upper half of the auditorium, where much of the original plaster decoration appeared to still be in situ.

Regal / ABC, Sauchiehall St, Glasgow

CJ MCNAIR, 1929, CATEGORY C-LISTED



The ABC Glasgow in 2020 [2]

The second fire to ravage Mackintosh's Glasgow School of Art building in 2018 unfortunately spread to the adjacent ABC building, leaving it a burnt-out shell. Functioning as bars and a concert venue at the time, these were only the latest in a long line of entertainment uses for a building that started as a Panorama and went via ice-skating palace, Hippodrome and dance hall before becoming ABC's flagship Glasgow cinema, with each use leaving clues in the fabric for those who knew where to look. The developers who own the site had wished to demolish the 1967 ABC2 next door prior to the fire and it would clearly be advantageous to them post-fire for the entire site to be cleared. As with Portobello, this has involved listed building consent (19/00266) for complete demolition with an increasingly alarmist set of structural reports warning that the building was in grave danger – so grave that the owners appeared to do nothing to make the building safe, leaving it to Glasgow City Council to shore the remains up. Objections were plentiful as much for the building's social and cultural history as its architecture – including from the Glasgow School of Art itself. Four

years on from the fire, the building continues to defy those grim structural reports by remaining resolutely upright and the Council still considers it perfectly safe for pedestrians to walk underneath. We have argued for retention of the main façade elements (little of the cinema interior survived the bar conversions) with the ruins behind able to be demolished via the east if they removed the relatively undamaged and unloved ABC2. The owners insist the only possible way to clear the site is to demolish the façade first, allowing access from the front. The application has been pending consideration for three years now, a decision delayed for reasons that are not entirely clear.

Lyceum, Govan

CJ MCNAIR & ROBERT ELDER, 1938, CATEGORY B-LISTED



The Lyceum Govan in July 2009 ^[1]

Applications for planning (20/00075) and listed building consent (20/00299) were refused by Glasgow City Council in July 2021 for a speculative refurbishment of this glorious, if dismally derelict, international moderne landmark. The building was subdivided in the 1970s with a wall across the front of the balcony, retaining that section as a cinema, whilst bingo operated in the former stalls. Also at this time, a stud wall clumsily partitioned the foyer to serve both uses separately. The cinema closed in 1981 but bingo soldiered on until 2006, since when the building has been disused.

The application sought composite use with a restaurant in the foyer (restored to a single volume but sealed off from the rest of the building), a cinema in the balcony and a concert venue in the stalls. In conservation terms, the application was weak, lacking detail and understanding on the treatment of historic fabric and spaces. Alterations to the main doors caused concern, as well as external finishes, the severing of the foyer and lack of detail on how other decorative elements would be retained or restored. Operationally, it was felt that hours of operation, noise, servicing and odour extraction would be an issue. Accordingly, both applications were refused. The owner subsequently appealed but the listed building refusal was upheld. The appeal for planning permission is still pending and hinges on a technicality as to whether the building still maintains the assembly and leisure use it enjoyed as a ciné-bingo operation. Photographs submitted as part of these appeals show the interior has been made wind and watertight but much of the decorative plasterwork appears to have been damaged.

Picturehouse / Regal, Auchterarder

CHARLES EWING, 1926, CATEGORY B-LISTED

We attempted to save this cinema back in 2007 when an application was submitted to demolish it for flats. That failed but fortunately, the economic crash appears to have put paid to the plans and they were never enacted. To our surprise, it was listed at Category B in 2019, as a well-preserved and rare example of a larger 1920s cinema in a small rural Scottish town. The listing description – tinyurl.com/regalauch – is very detailed both historically and architecturally but among the highlights of the building are a large first floor café, a grand stair, the pressed metal auditorium ceiling and some interesting decorative detail on the sidewalls. The building closed as a cinema in 1963, following which it was used as an antiques shop until 2019. Pleasingly, it now appears that a local group wish to restore the building and bring it back as a multi-purpose venue, including cinema use. Their website contains much detail, archive and current photographs and future proposals and can be found here:

www.auchterarderpicturehouse.co.uk

BB Cinema, Greenock

ORIGINAL ARCHITECT UNKNOWN, 1914, NOT LISTED



The BB Cinema Greenock in the early stages of demolition ^[2]

Interior photographs of this cinema appear to have shown a pleasing – if typical of its period – barrel-vaulted ceiling, featuring decorative plasterwork on the ribs but the original façade was lost in a 1930s remodelling. Subsequent bingo use, as well as an Egyptian-themed nightclub, left it looking externally very plain and the interior was unlikely to merit listing on its own. Two decades of dereliction had also brought some of the plasterwork down and it had been considered a blight on the town in recent years. It was finally demolished in March this year, revealing some elements of the original 1914 façade again, although the diggers retrieving sarcophagi and mummy's heads leftover from the nightclub days led to sights much more like an exotic archaeological dig than the rainy Inverclyde location might otherwise have suggested!

Capitol, Leith

JM JOHNSTON & JS ROSS, 1928, UNLISTED



The interior of the Capitol Leith in September 2008 ^[1]

Local campaigners have been disappointed by a decision in March to exclude the Capitol from an extension to Leith's conservation area. Two proposals were on the table, one of which did include the bingo hall but campaigners claim that only the one that mooted its possible future removal to facilitate neighbouring new developments was discussed and approved.

Opened in 1928 under Gaumont/GTC, the vast 2,300-seat cinema has been on bingo since 1964, currently operating under the Club 3000 brand. It is perhaps unique in the UK having its entrance under a (now disused) railway arch, with the auditorium on the other side. We had some communications with locals a few years ago when they unsuccessfully tried to get it listed, so will keep an eye on the conservation area extension when it is brought back before the planning committee in June. The area is currently tipped for high demand by developers due to the Edinburgh Trams extension currently being built metres away on Leith Walk, particularly on the brownfield sites immediately adjacent to the bingo hall.

Photos by ^[1] Harry Rigby; ^[2] Gary Painter

A SPRING DAY OUT IN SMART MAYFAIR

A report of the CTA visit to Mayfair and beyond on Tuesday 29 March by Adam Unger



Screen ① at the Curzon Mayfair [4]

This was our second visit to London in recent months, commencing at the Curzon Mayfair, which opened in 1966, designed by Sir John Burnet Tait & Partners, with Horace Hammond as the project architect and is Britain's youngest Grade II listed cinema. This replaced the earlier Curzon of 1934 by the same architectural firm, which featured an elegant auditorium of simplicity and concealed lighting, housed in a restrained brick single-storey structure. Regrettable as the loss of the old Curzon is, its replacement is of high quality and reflective of the period it was built in, as was its 1930s predecessor.

This mixed-use development includes a restaurant, flats and offices. The exterior is faced in Portland stone, with the original signage in Curzon Street and canopy all surviving remarkably intact



The entrance foyer of the Curzon [4]

The entrance foyer is slightly lower than street level, accessed to the side of the building in Hertford Street. This low-ceilinged space has a bar to one side, with a sliding screen that can be drawn across to separate this area. This striking screen of an abstract relief pattern, looking like ceramic, is made of fibreglass, designed by William Mitchell. Much of the 60s signage on the foyer doors have survived, with the sense of luxury extending into the toilets, lavishly lined in Carrara marble. What alterations that have taken place over the years have been executed in a sensitive manner.

The original auditorium, now screen ①, is unusually placed on the first-floor level, rather, than more commonly in the basement of such developments. Accessed by a dividing staircase from the main foyer, the auditorium has a cellular-lit ceiling of concrete, which provides the principal house lighting and acts as a major structural element for the floors of offices and flats above. The smooth light surface of the ceiling contrasts with the side walls of abstract sculptural panels in fibreglass, also by William Mitchell. We speculated that it had probably been painted over in a darker shade in more recent years. The stadium-style auditorium, now seating 307 (originally 530), has a unique feature of two private boxes, each seating six, neatly inserted at the rear, flanking the projection room. A second screen of now 65 seats was discreetly inserted in the recessed seating area at the back of the auditorium in 2003 and has recently been refurbished, with plans afoot to refurbish screen ① with new seating. The projection room is larger than expected, being also equipped to run film, with a dedicated team of projectionists. Sophie, the manager, said that audience attendances hadn't yet recovered to pre-Covid levels, with a lack of product being one of the reasons. However, the Curzon still hosts premières, with the closing of Hertford Street being a great advantage for such events.



Screen ① from a private box [2]



Screen ② at the Curzon [4]

The Curzon is currently under threat from the ground landlord, with plans for conference and possibly theatrical use as well, which would entail compromise and the loss of sole cinema use. We left the Curzon with time for a leisurely lunch.

The Trafalgar Theatre in Whitehall, just a stone's throw away from Nelson's Column, was quickly reached by bus, where we were welcomed by the manager, Christina. Formerly the Whitehall Theatre, which opened in 1930 – one of the great boom years of theatre construction. The architect was Edward A Stone with interior work by Marc-Henri Levy and Gaston Laverdet. The Portland stone frontage bears a strong resemblance to the Astorias at Brighton and Southend, which were also Stone schemes. The theatre became well known for the long-running 'Whitehall farces', that were staged there in the



The façade and auditorium at the Trafalgar Theatre [2]

1950s and 60s, by actor-manager Brian Rix. The Trafalgar is Grade II listed and was subdivided in 2004, with the rear stalls separated from the rest of the auditorium and renamed the Trafalgar Studios. Only last year it was undivided, back to its original form and the subject of a major restoration. The seating capacity is 630 and is currently staging *Jersey Boys*.

The opportunity has been taken to enlarge and refurbish the entrance foyer sympathetically. The high auditorium has a very deep balcony, which extends right down to the proscenium, with the steep stepping giving an unobstructed view of the stage. The art deco scheme has an angular geometric emphasis, dictated by the deeply coved chamfered proscenium and the main ceiling recess. A paint analysis was done in the auditorium, resulting in a redecoration to the original colour scheme, which was predominantly black, with use of tinted silver on the delightful reliefs on the box fronts and walls. A contrasting green deco pattern has been used on the seating.

As is common planning with West End theatres, the stalls are below street level, which unusually has a Royal Box in the rear stalls. Christina related the difficulties of operating during the Covid period, particularly regarding some of the anti-social audience behaviour experienced, with regard to mobile phones and wearing masks.



The CTA group on stage at the Trafalgar Theatre [3]

We had the opportunity of going on stage, which is quite restricted in depth and wing space. This provided a very good vantage point, looking towards the rear of the house. It was indeed heartening to see this important surviving art deco theatre, revived by a sensitive restoration.

Our last call of the day was to the Garden Cinema in Covent Garden, which is situated in Parker Street near the Kingsway. This had only recently opened on 15 March 2022 with the documentary *The Real Charlie Chaplin*. It's an art house cinema, running seasons of classic films, as well as new releases from around the world. You descend from the entrance hall to a lower foyer with a bar area, all in dark red and black and carefully lit, giving a cinematic feel. An art deco theme has been adopted, which adds to this ambience, with a montage of images from films and their stars lining the walls, particularly in an area named



The frontage, the 'tunnel' and a screen at the new Garden Cinema [2]

'The Tunnel', with alcove seating along its length. The cinema has two screens of 70 and 40 seats, with a third screen to be added soon.

It's most encouraging to see a new independent cinema opening, with an art house policy and we were made most welcome by Richard and his team with free refreshments and a brief show in one of the screens. At the time of the visit, lifetime membership was being offered at £20, which represents remarkable value for a central London venue.

This most satisfying day concluded by having visited three quite diverse properties, from the 1960s, 1930s and the latest cinema opening. We wish all these venues well in regaining their audiences.

Our thanks go to the organisers, Richard Gray and Ray Ritmeester with the assistance of Kevin Gooding. Also, thanks to the following for their hospitality; Sophie Wardman (Curzon), Christina Horsepool (Trafalgar) and Richard Vitola-Jones (Garden Cinema).

Photos by: [1] Kevin Gooding; [2] Adam Unger; [3] Ray Duns

SEALED WITH A KISS

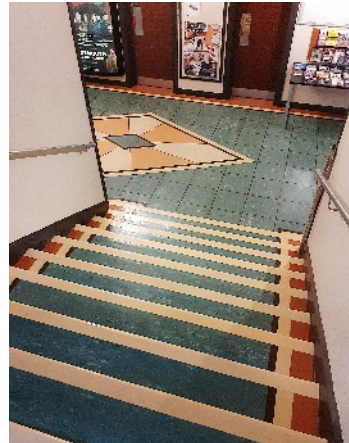
by Mike Whitcombe

It's been a tough two years for the cinema industry. Months of enforced closure due to a deadly pandemic have forced cinemas across the land to struggle financially. Although huge cinema chains such as Odeon and Cineworld have been hit as badly as smaller ones, it's the much-loved independents that have had to fight desperately to survive. The survival, then, of any small-town independent operator who is probably the only cultural beacon for miles, is a reason for celebration. One such cinema that has weathered the pandemic and it now doing what it does best – providing memories, entertainment and escapism – is the Tivoli in Wimborne Minster. Once again open, the pandemic proved to be yet another momentous chapter in the history of this beautifully maintained Dorset cinema, which really does remind the patron of a long forgotten golden age of cinema going.



This single-screen gem opened as a ciné/theatre on 24 August 1936. There was much excitement about the opening programme but not because one of the films was *Kid in Hollywood*, a one-reeler starring a five-year-old Shirley Temple. The excitement was caused by the main feature called *Father O'Flynn*, a British musical starring Jean Adrienne, who appeared in person to declare the cinema open. Reports of her visit say after arriving by train she was driven to the Tivoli in a Rolls Royce.

The owner of Wimborne's first and only purpose-built cinema was local builder Mr AS Prince. He had been involved in local film presentation for several years, occasionally showing movies at the Victoria Hall, which is now part of the King's Head Hotel in Wimborne town square, as well as nearby Sturminster Marshall village hall. To design the Tivoli, Prince hired Bournemouth based architect Edward de Wilde-Holding (1886-1956). Edward de Wilde-Holding was a prominent architect of Wessex cinemas who, in the space of four years beginning in 1933, designed nine cinemas and enlarged two existing ones. Apart from the Tivoli, he designed the Moderne Winton, the Cerdic Chard, the Savoy Shaftsbury, the Regal Gillingham, the Plaza Wincanton, the Palace Blandford Forum, the Devonia Honiton and the Wellesley Wellington. He also enlarged the Premier News Theatre in Bournemouth while his firm, with a design from CH Fowler, also enlarged the Shaftesbury Hall Bournemouth, into West's Pictures.



Edward de Wilde-Holding was also well known for designing prestigious modern private residences in the latest art deco style. His understanding of the gracefulness of art deco is visible as soon as you enter the Tivoli, with the auditorium and its trough lighting particularly impressive. The front of the Tivoli, however, is Georgian as it was the façade of Borough House, a Georgian town house, which previously stood on the site. When the cinema was built the house was demolished except for the frontage, which had to be retained and incorporated into the new build. A large, well-maintained garden, Georgian-built summer house and an ancient cedar tree occupied the area the auditorium is now situated on.

In the 1950s ownership passed to South Coast Theatres Ltd. Without any nearby competition, the Tivoli always did good business. But a proposed road widening scheme in 1979, by which time the owners were Myles Byrne Cinemas, resulted in the unthinkable. A Compulsory Purchase Order was slapped on the Tivoli in preparation for its demolition and in April 1980 the cinema closed. The final night saw a double bill of *Convoy*, starring Kris Kristofferson and *Sweeney 2*, with John Thaw and Dennis Waterman in the lead roles.



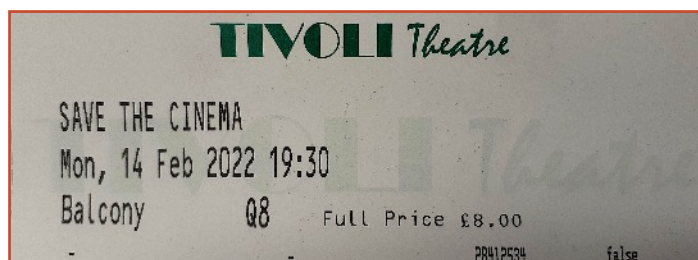


The Bay City Rollers on stage at the Tivoli in 2014

The road widening scheme, though, was soon abandoned and the boarded-up Tivoli became the property of Dorset County Council. In 1990 a group of dedicated enthusiasts led by former Wimborne Mayor and councillor, Mr Malcolm Angel, decided to form the *Friends of the Tivoli*. On 23 November 1993 the Tivoli reopened its doors with Wimborne Festival Theatre Company presenting *Alphabetical Order*, a play by Michael Frayn. It was appropriate that a stage presentation relaunched the future of the Tivoli as stage shows have certainly helped the building remain financially viable. Many famous acts have drawn big crowds over subsequent years including Elkie Brooks, Acker Bilk, American Blues artist Larry Garner, who recorded a live album there in 2001 and comedians Eddie Izzard, Lee Evans and Al Murray. Les McKeown's Bay City Rollers were regulars at the Tivoli before the recent pandemic and chatting to Les one afternoon in September 2014, a few hours before he performed to a sell-out Tivoli crowd, it was easy to understand why. Les, who sadly passed away last year, explained he always tried to include the Tivoli on the Rollers' annual UK tour as the five-hundred capacity auditorium had good acoustics and created an intimate environment, which produced an electric atmosphere that resulted in an enjoyable night for both the band and their fans.

The pandemic and the enforced closure of the building due to Government guidelines could have resulted in the Tivoli again becoming boarded up and deserted. But a 'Help the Tivoli' appeal with a target of £75,000 was surpassed by January 2022 meaning the Tivoli's dedicated team of staff and volunteers can continue to entertain their loyal patrons. The Tivoli, in fact, was the perfect way to end a trip to Dorset on Valentine's Day 2022. An evening screening of *Save The Cinema*, the true tale of Liz Evans' successful campaign to save the Lyric Theatre in Carmarthen, Wales, in the mid-1990s, was showing that evening and considering the Tivoli's history it was the ideal place to see this enchanting, feel-good movie starring Samantha Morton and Jonathan Pryce. It wasn't a full house but de Wilde-Holding's flowing art deco design makes this cinema a romantic venue to visit no matter how many tickets have been sold. And even though my wife, Janice and I were sat in the front row of the circle, we sneaked a loving kiss – it was 14 February, after all!

All photos by the author



WESTERN ELECTRIC

By David A Ellis

The Western Electric sound system was a favourite with many exhibitors in the cinema world. It was based at Bush House in London, which became home to the BBC world service. Western Electric was part of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and was founded in 1869 and served as the primary supplier and purchasing agent to the Bell system. It was a very large organisation and apart from reproduction equipment for cinemas, played a big part in the recording side; its name is often displayed on film credits.

In 1928 they only had 400 cinema installations, leased through Electrical Research Products Inc. Prices at that time ranged from £1,000 to £3,000 for a fifteen-year rental. They stated at the time that Western Electric will not promise results if their film is used on rival projectors, or if rival film is used on their machines. Regarding advertising their products, it was said: "Checking upon its advertising schedule during 1929, Western Electric announce that it took more advertising space in the film trade papers of both America and Great Britain than any other manufacturer of talking picture equipment."

Servicing was done on a regular basis until 1931. The service engineer carried out an equipment inspection each fortnight and every six months the technical and acoustical inspector carried out more exhaustive checks. It was stated that exhibitors attached great importance to the six-month services, which were thorough and guaranteed uninterrupted running. By January 1931 the company had decided to switch from fortnightly visits to monthly. It was stated that the suggestion that Western Electric intends to service its theatres but once a month as an experiment is rather a violent change to spring on the exhibitor and to give a definite opinion as to whether it will work satisfactorily in the majority of cases, is hard to foretell. It was said that it certainly adds a feather to the cap of the projectionist when the gap in between servicing can be widened by fifty per cent. It is getting near the day when we shall require service no more and only a trouble-call department will ever be required.

1931 was also the year that the company brought out noiseless reproduction at no extra cost to the cinema owner. Advertising stated that they were investing thousands in the system. In March 1931 a new type A was announced, costing £785. Managing director ES Gregg said, "The new equipment is an attachment system for use in connection with Simplex projector heads and pedestals and designed to operate from an AC 50 cycle power supply. Later, systems were produced to link with other makes. "The service charge for the new equipment will be £3.10s per week. The new equipment will be known as the 3A type and only a limited number of dates for May installations are available. The first opening dates available are for 4 May."

There was an announcement in April 1931 that Gaumont British was installing the system in its key theatres. By January 1931 a total of 1,200 British cinemas were equipped with the unit, including the Phoenix London, Savoy Folkestone and the Palladium Paisley. The 1,500th British theatre to be fitted was the Ritz Edgware. The occasion was celebrated by a special luncheon given by the directors of Western Electric at the Savoy Hotel.

Western Electric was a highly successful company dealing in cinema sound systems, including the highly praised Mirophonic system. Many cinemas decided to state what sound system they were using in their publicity. Chester's ABC Regal used the system. Other leading manufacturers included RCA, installed at the Classic Chester and British Acoustic in use at the Gaumont Chester. Western Electric ceased on 7 February 1996.



TWO EAST END SUPER CINEMAS

By Tim McCullen

Two East End Super Cinemas with over 1,000 seats, each of which made it to the 1980s

My third CTA visit, on 24 October 1981, was to the East End, doubtless arranged following the announcement on 19 June 1981 that twenty-nine Rank Organization sites were going to close due to falling admissions and rising costs.

According to the 1980 CTA *Directory of Cinemas*, there were a number of Odeon sites that were still single-screen, so we suspected that it would mainly be these which would most likely to be destined for closure. The surprise was that a number of twin/triple sites would in fact be included. The Gants Hill Odeon had recently been tripled, so was assumed safe at that time but East Ham Odeon was not going to prove as lucky in receiving a similar investment, with the latter sadly on the closure list.

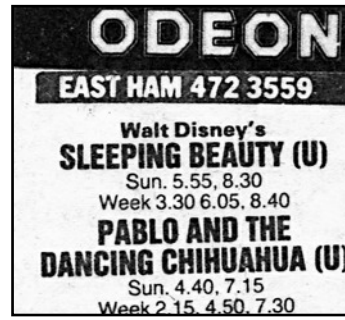


The façade of the Odeon East Ham c1949 – CTA Archive



The interior of the Odeon East Ham in 1981

The Odeon at 7 – 11 Barking Road was built on the site of the Boleyn Electric Theatre by the architect Keith P Roberts and opened 18 July 1938, being modernised in the 1960s and latterly seating 1,840. During the 1981 visit, the auditorium was warm and the carpets and seats were in very good condition. I overheard from one of the staff that Rank may well have contemplated tripling the site but the continuation of the ABC at Upton Park, when it became the ACE in 1979, might well have prevented this – presumably that site took the 'ABC release' and product availability might have been a factor in its financial future. On speaking to the projectionist, I learnt that it had been a long while since there had been a full house and that the "bloke down the road" (at the ACE Upton Park) would be rubbing his hands when the Odeon closed. It was thought that Rank may sublet the building to another operator, which would indicate that the Odeon might well still have been trading in the black. Ultimately, however, the Odeon closed on 31 October 1981 with the final screening being of *Sleeping Beauty*, which I understand many CTA members attended, after which the building was boarded up. Various applicants I worked with remarked feeling regretful at seeing the building closed, as they had many fond memories of their own visits to watch films there.



tions in the former Gaumont (now demolished) and former Granada have since closed.

In 1987, Peter Walker, of Camden Town Parkway fame, expressed an interest in reopening the former Odeon as a three-screen cinema; however, these plans failed to proceed either, it being understood that Rank were looking to sell their leasehold.

In about 1988, I was once more in the area and met a maintenance operative, who was sympathetic to letting me visit, had time not sadly been so short. One remark he made inferred that the Odeon management would like to reopen the cinema.

In 1994, I saw a planning application to demolish the cinema in order to build a Job Centre. No doubt over the years there had been many applications to redevelop the site.

In the local press of March 1995 it was announced that Shadid Naeem, who had successfully been showing films in the Newham Borough since the 1980s, was going to take over the building and run cinema for both English and Asian Films. The cinema reopened as the Boleyn Cinema with a function hall sited in the former stalls. It later became a three-screen cinema; screen ① seated 794 (its original capacity) and the two rear stalls cinemas seated 270 each. In the two smaller cinemas, the rake was reversed and the screens were at the front of the building with the projection suite projecting beyond the edge of the circle. The cinema was a very tasteful conversion and even the upstairs projection room was carpeted, a complete first for me!



The cinema as the Boleyn in April 2006

Currently, there are two cinemas in the circle, with the stalls area becoming a function room again, before becoming the 'International Gospel Truth Church'. Have the downstairs mini cinemas been completely removed now?

In 2021, the Boleyn Cinema won a COVID grant when the UK went into lockdown. It is unclear whether films are now being shown now and, unfortunately, a planning application was granted in 2021 for demolition in favour of residential development. Who knows whether the building will remain there in the long term?

The nearby West Ham Football ground has been developed into several hundred flats; it begs the question, "Do the residents of the new flats not go to a cinema?"



The Odeon East Ham showing *Escape to Victory* in October 1981 and the management counting the takings for that film, in which West Ham footballer Bobby Moore appeared – photos by Terry Creswell

About a third of the twenty-nine Odeon sites that were scheduled to close in October 1981 continued under different banners for a few years, some having had other uses, while some have sadly been demolished. In East Ham's case, the building remained empty for fourteen years and in that period was not extensively vandalised, unlike other sites, although I understand that the front stalls, which are partly below ground level, were flooded at some point.



The ABC Upton Park c1968



The interior of the ABC/ACE on the CTA visit October 1981

The ABC/ACE opened as the Carlton on 29 October 1928 under the banner of RC Cinemas but by 1936 was controlled by ABC with a seating capacity of 2,217 in a semi-stadium layout. The façade had a large Egyptian exterior and interior. Receiving substantial war damage

ODEON, EAST HAM + CARLTON/ABC/ACE, UPTON PARK
SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER 1981

At 12 Noon we shall be visiting the Odeon Theatre, Barking Road, East Ham, London, E6, by kind permission of Rank Leisure, also of the Manager, Peter Carey. Built on site of New Boleyn Electric Theatre. Opened on 18 July 1938 with 2,212 seats in stalls and circle. Capacity nowadays 1,840. Architect Keith P Roberts for Odeon Theatres. Some years ago was modernised internally. Scheduled to close on Saturday 31 October 1981. We depart not later than 12.40pm in order to then visit another property. The Ace Cinema, Green Street, Upton Park, London, E15, opened as the Carlton under the banner of R C Cinemas, but by 1936 was controlled by ABC. Originally seating for 2,177 in a semi-stadium layout. Nowadays 1,775. Opening film, on 29 October 1928, "The Spy," and added attraction, on stage, being the "clever and graceful" Rodney Hudson Carlton Girls. The architect of this interestingly unusual property was George Coles. Our visit is by kind permission of Alternative Cinema Entertainments, also the Manager, Mr Jagwami. Sincere apologies for brief advance notice. This outing is on a Saturday because of ethnic shows on Sundays at both the Odeon and the Ace. Underground Upton Park (District Line) ten minutes' walk. Buses 5 15 23 58 162 238 and 81, also Green Line 723.

The CTA Bulletin announcement of the 1981 visit

on a number of occasions, it was consequently closed on 27 January 1945. On 10 August 1953, the venue reopened with a simple frontage, the seating capacity reduced to 1,755 and the organ removed. From November 1978, ACE (Alternative Cinema Entertainments) took over, with it reopening under that name in February 1979.

On our October 1981 visit, many CTA members found the cinema's architecture more outstanding than that of the previously visited Odeon East Ham, although I personally preferred the Odeon.

There was much speculation that the cinema would be tripled when the Odeon East Ham closed and even an article in the CTA Bulletin of November/December 1973 agreed, given that both circuits were actively implementing subdivision of some of their sites at the time. The building was certainly an interesting labyrinth; however the seats and carpets appeared very worn and it certainly was not as warm a venue as the Odeon East Ham. Possibly, the cost of refurbishment so desperately needed, was a significant factor in ABC/EMI's pulling out and sub-letting the property.



Whether the 'bloke down the road' at the ACE did rub his hands and how much he rubbed them when the Odeon East Ham closed, will never be known for sure. But he certainly couldn't have rubbed them for long, as the ACE closed for the final time with the showing of *Mad Max* and *Mad Max Two* on 23 March 1983.

It was reported in the CTA Bulletin (Vol 17 No 2 March/April 1983 page 10) that the cinema was closed for tripling. Upon investigations by the author, it turned out that the building was to become twin cinemas and a snooker club (presumably the cinemas would have been in the circle and the stalls at the front become a snooker club), with ACE having the first option to operate the cinemas. These plans never materialised. Instead, the foyer became a shop and the remainder of the building became derelict, staying so for any years, over which time, many plans for the site were mooted and a number of fires suffered. The venue was used as a 'film set' in London Weekend Television's drama, *London's Burning*, when the newly promoted former station officer Nick Georgiadis, who was played by Andrew Kazamia, died firefighting. Except for the foyer, the site has now been demolished and is currently a car park, which the CTA visited on 16 October 1999.

The demographic population of the East Ham and Upton Park area has considerably changed in the last fifty plus years. In October 1981, we made our first Saturday visit, Asian films being shown early on Sunday at each venue.

Whether a three-screen Odeon East Ham and/or a three-screen ABC or ACE would have survived in the long term, will never be known, although it has been proved that a three screen Boleyn Cinema (ex Odeon) Asian cinema was a success for many years.

One must not forget that completion for this area has also been changed with five new cinemas, as follows:

Showcase Beckton	12 Screens
Cineworld Ilford	11 Screens
Picture House Stratford	4 Screens
Vue Stratford	20 Screens

Additionally, the Barking Odeon was upgraded from three to six screens in April 1990 until its closure on 10 December 1998. That site was demolished, although a new cinema is now being built in Barking.

ARE YOU SITTING COMFORTABLY?

By Dave Harte †

"Pre-eminent among all – is the 'Kenilworth' chair,
for those who want a real high-class article."

Kinematograph Weekly – Thursday 9 March 1922

This is a story of bums on cinema seats. Seats made and upholstered in Birmingham and supplied to cinemas across the United Kingdom and the world during the height of the cinema-building boom between the First and Second World Wars.

There were two main companies in Birmingham involved in the trade of kitting out cinemas with seats, carpets, curtains (both across windows and screens) and associated interior decorations. Both Beck and Windibank (who used the trademark of 'Beckwin') and WW Turner emerged prior to the First World War and both had their roots in the well-established theatre and interior furnishing firm of AR Dean.



THEATRICAL BEGINNINGS

Albert Reuben Dean had founded his firm in 1874 and within 20 years had a long list of theatre clients. Based in Corporation Street in Birmingham City centre, it would take out advertisements in the theatrical journal *The Era*, boasting that its 'New Automatic Adjustable Back Tip-up Theatre Chairs are the Best in the Trade' (22 June 1895). It was involved in the manufacture of seating as well as just upholstery, filing a patent in 1894 for a tip-up chair with a self-straightening back that allowed for a greater gap between rows of seats ("to make more room for a person passing along the gangway behind the chair, the person seated has only to sit erect, when the back straightens itself" – patent application, 2 March 1894).



Cover of 1925 Beck and Windibank catalogue

Image courtesy of Birmingham Libraries and Birmingham Museums Trust

An advert published in *The Era* in September 1894 listed 54 theatres for which they had "contracts in hand". However, by 1903 the company was wound up, only for Albert Reuben Dean to buy it back from the receiver and continue trading as AR Dean & Sons Ltd. That too was wound up in 1910 but Dean gave it one last go as AR Dean (1910) Limited. This time, he had separated out the theatrical furnishings side of the business from the home furnishings (which had a store on Old Square in Birmingham). He based the furnishing firm in Clement Street, near Birmingham City centre, a street where many metalworking and foundry firms were located at the time. But Dean was becoming something of a serial failure and the *Birmingham Daily Mail* reported on 16 December 1912 that this firm also failed. The Official Receiver partly blamed: "the acceptance of unprofitable contracts and bad debts." AR Dean was no more.

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The 'Invincible' tip-up chair; from a 1936 Beck and Windibank catalogue
Image courtesy of Birmingham Libraries and Birmingham Museums Trust

SUPPLYING THE GOLDEN AGE OF CINEMA

But from AR Dean's legacy came two firms that would build on its contacts and personnel and go on to be significant suppliers of cinema seating and furnishings. Beck and Windibank advertised themselves as the successors to AR Dean. The face of Lewis R Beck appears in an advertisement from 1921 (in *The Kinematograph* 10 February) with the proclamation: "A live progressive firm, conducted by the men whose names appear above and who are known personally to the majority of those interested in the theatre and kinema world." The advert is keen to point out that there is "no connection with any other firm. One address only, Clement Street, Birmingham."

Perhaps the other firm, Beck and Windibank, was keen to not be connected to was WW Turner, based in York Street, Kings Heath (later moving to Station Road in Northfield in the 1930s). Turner had originally worked for AR Dean, boasting about the connection in a 1912 advert in the *The Bioscope*: "Manager: WW Turner (late 14 years with AR Dean)." That advert featured the rather basic looking 'specialty chair' for six shillings and sixpence. It was the "talk of the trade" it claimed. More opulent chair designs were to follow, with both companies doing their best to outdo each other in emphasising the comfort and luxury of their designs as the cinema trade boomed and their markets extended nationally and internationally.

A sample of Beck and Windibank's trade catalogues are available in the Library of Birmingham's archives and they reveal an extensive range of seats and furnishing. Seats are named in a way as to connote opulence and history: 'The Imperial', 'The Regal', 'The Piccadilly', 'The Lancastrian', 'The Embassy', 'The York', 'The Tower'. The cheap seats were more simply named: 'The Chummy' or were simply numbered – No 52 was one its simplest tip-up chairs.

WW Turner's range of seats were similarly named. 'The Stirling' would "last for years," it proclaimed in an advert from 1924. They also had 'The Warwick' and 'The Balmoral', while 970 of the Turner 'Sandringham' chairs were supplied to the Lewes Odeon for its 1934 opening. Their adverts often emphasised comfort as well as luxury:

"How comfortable" says the patron as he sinks into the roominess of a 'Turner' chair. The comfortable man enjoys the picture, enjoys the music and enjoys his smoke. The comfortable man comes again – and tells his friends about it, too.

(Advertisement in *The Cinema* May 1925)

Like Beck and Windibank, Turner also offered a complete set of cinema furnishings services. Both firms would use advertorial-type articles in the trade press throughout the 1920s and 30s to list the many contracts they had in hand and this excerpt from an article in *The Cinema* (January 1925) describes the plans for the kitting out of the soon to be opened Kingsway cinema in Kings Heath:



The Kingsway Birmingham as Gala Bingo in August 2004

The Kingsway Cinema will be ready at the end of this month to be fitted up with chairs Turner's have ready for them. Super tub chairs will be for the balcony patrons and two grades of very comfortable chairs in the auditorium. The oak polished woodwork is tastefully [sic] inlaid and upholstery is a cheery orange coloured velvet. Carpets of black and orange will harmonise, while the scheme is carried through with curtains in orange, trimmed green and black satin.

It would seem that there wasn't a cinema in Birmingham whose seats or furnishings hadn't been supplied by either WW Turner or Beck and Windibank but they both also had plenty of national and, in the case of Beck and Windibank, international contracts as well. Mid 1920s pamphlets list contracts secured in: Calcutta, Grahamstown (now Makhanda) and Ladysmith in South Africa, Brussels, Sydney, Melbourne, Singapore and Buenos Aires, where it had a local agent.

While Beck and Windibank had a diverse range of clients ("the Southport Football Club sends repeat orders" – *The Cinema* October 1924), Turner seemed to focus wholly on the cinema trade. Perhaps with good reason, as the

average cinema screen in the UK in 1935 had 900 seats and there were 3.9 million cinema seats overall. By way of comparison, in 1919 there were close to 940,000 cinema seats and an average of 205 seats per screen. While the late 1920s saw cinema screens dominated by Hollywood-produced content and a decline in production of British Films (see Linda Wood; *British Films 1927-39*), the cinemas were still largely independently owned with only 13 cinema chains owning more than 10 cinemas in 1927, compared with 39 by 1937.



Advertisement for WW Turner from Supplement to The Cinema, News and Property Gazette Technical Supplement, 2 October 1924

By the mid-1930s competition for the bottoms of cinema-goers was fierce and as Linda Wood notes, new cinemas built by more aggressive chains were being placed in areas where there was a cinema already: "The newer ones tended to take business from the older, usually independently owned cinemas, with the latter then going out of business."

COMPETITION AND DEMISE

Cinema admission in the UK peaked at 1.6 billion in 1946 but the post-war market for seats and furnishing was unlikely to have been as vibrant as it was in the boom years of the 1920s and 30s. During those years WW Turner and Beck and Windibank did have competitors such as: J Springer & Co and Tomlyn and Stone, both of High Wycombe, an area with a long history of furniture-making; Hall & Dixon Ltd of London; Lazarus & Son Ltd of Hackney. But those firms either didn't shout quite as loud as the two Birmingham companies, with their long lists of 'contracts in hand', or perhaps they didn't quite do the same volume of business. Another High Wycombe firm, Dawsons Seating, emerged post-war and were sole contractors to ABC cinemas for a time before turning to making office and lecture theatre seating. Essex-based Kirwin and Simpson Seating are still going and still supplying theatres and cinemas worldwide. They started in 1946 by using parachute off-cuts to upholster cinema chairs.

By the 1950s, WW Turner's advertising had lost any emphasis on opulence and were focused largely on longevity, proclaiming in an ad in *The Ideal Kinema* in April 1957 that their seats were "the best seats for the longest runs." Gone was the picture of the seat itself, to be replaced rather oddly, by a picture of a bus. Similarly, a Beck and Windibank's advert from 1958 doesn't feature a chair either, showing instead a woman seated on nothing, with a slogan: "I didn't notice the seating during the performance – it was so comfortable."

On 12 May 1967 Beck and Windibank was wound up. Turner lasted longer but by 1975 its small, simple advert in *The Stage* ("Seating repairs, Re-upholstery, Carpet, etc. Enquiries welcomed") was a pale shadow of its glamorous boastful advertising of the golden age. It too would be wound up on 3 December 1982.

BIRMINGHAM INNOVATORS

The two Birmingham firms that we have touched upon here drew on their experience and contacts in the theatre industry of the 19th Century in order to make the most of the booming cinema-furnishing market between the wars in the early 20th Century. They were innovators as well as suppliers. As well as the self-straightening seat that AR Dean patented, Beck and Windibank filed a patent for the squeak-free seat in 1931. Its "anti-percussion device [...] for the purpose of conducting to the obtainment of silence." It's not clear if any Birmingham-supplied cinema seats are still being sat on today but if you're in a restored older cinema and its antique seat doesn't squeak, then it might well be an 'Imperial', or a 'Regal', or a 'Piccadilly', or a 'Stirling', or a 'Kenilworth', or a ...

USEFUL LINKS:

- tinyurl.com/2p97bzdf – UK Cinema Association: admissions 1935 onwards
- tinyurl.com/2p93zbut – UK Cinema Association: sites and screens 2009-2020
- tinyurl.com/2p935kwk – From the BFI: British Films 1927-1939 [171-page downloadable pdf]
- tinyurl.com/m7avyadc – A British Newspaper Archive blog: *The Golden Age of Cinema Going*
- tinyurl.com/3t8ytnmp – Kirwin & Simpson website



Rear of playing card advertising WW Turner, late 1930s

THE (1969) GOOD CINEMA GUIDE

By Ben Doman

No.20 ABC READING

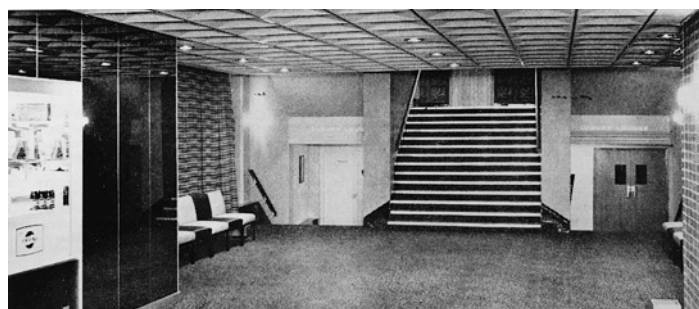
For his November 1969 *Good Cinema Guide* visit in *Today's Cinema* magazine, Louis Lowenthal decided to venture to Reading in Berkshire. Given its proximity to London he wondered if its cinemas would give the same level of comfort as in the West End. He starts, "My journey took me to the ABC cinema [former Central of 1921] and I was not entirely delighted with the results of my visit."



Frontage of the ABC Reading, showing *The April Fools* in 1969. The shop on the right-hand side of the entrance was later converted into The Crystal Rooms, one of ABC's other ventures. CTA Archive

Mr Lowenthal notes that it was a "... peculiar house; it starts being very bright in the foyer where the pay desk and the sweet kiosk are standing and ends by being very dull in the auditorium." In one of two rather scathing replies printed in a future issue, Len Ketley notes, a little tongue in cheek, "... It's a funny thing but I've noticed this in a lot of cinemas. In fact, I've done research in this connection and after a series of tests I have proved beyond doubt that the cause is due to managers insisting on having the lights dimmed when showing films."

Mr Lowenthal then investigates the signs for the Luxury Lounge, "...much play is made of this... It is a square room comfortably furnished with settees and a good carpet and curtains but to my mind in no way justifying the space it occupied which I should have thought could have been put to better use for a small catering project." In fact, he had completely missed the point of the Luxury Lounge, where the stalls had been re-seated and spaced and was in fact in the lounge's outer lobby, off which were described by ABC Assistant Managing Director W Cartlidge in another reply as "...luxurious toilets.."



Rear end of the narrow entrance foyer. The combined paybox and kiosk are on the left and signs for Luxury Lounge can just be made out above the doors either side of the staircase. The door just visible at the top of the stairs was to the projection suite. The staircase doubled back to the left and right of the landing and the entrance to the screen in the ballroom was on this level. The projection room for that screen was reached via a door in the gent's toilet corridor and up the original staircase (with ornate wood carved handrails) to the café and ballroom. A single central staircase carried on up to the circle level.

ABC News, December 1967



Auditorium after the Luxury Lounge treatment in 1967. Wall curtaining was in gold, Columbia seats in yellow and the carpet in the blue design first seen at the New Bristol Centre in 1966. The original ornate ceiling can be seen above the circle; the projection room ports are in the centre of the circle front. There was a room to the left of the ports, later a staff room, that was possibly the original rewind room and the manager's office was behind this. When the auditorium was subdivided in 1977 a new projection room for the circle screen was constructed in the foyer behind the central doors at the rear of the circle. A new stage was constructed in front of the circle, which was walled off.

ABC News, December 1967



Opening of the refurbished cinema in 1967, with (L to R) JG Linsell (in charge of the opening), LE Carpenter (standing in for ABC's W Cartlidge), Alderman F Taylor, I Riches (manager), the Mayoress and D Robilliard (district manager) in front of the entrance doors. ABC News, December 1967

Choosing to sit in the circle, Mr Lowenthal was shown to his seat. Regretting this decision he notes there was "...literally no legroom..." and the seat "...let out a squawk like an offended hen when I sat down..." Also noted was that the seats in the stalls looked to be newer and better upholstered, which of course they were, being the refurbished Luxury Lounge.



The 'very small' screen – Cinema Treasures [34957]

The sound and colour were both noted as being good, although the screen seemed very small. The auditorium was indeed very long and thin and the view from the circle must have seemed distant. There was an ice cream girl highlighted by a spotlight during the interval, who proceeded to cover all parts of the stalls and circle. All staff were pleasant and courteous. The cinema was clean, with no cigarette stubs in the ash trays, although the toilets were described as "rather grim". Presumably these were the circle set and not the luxurious ones downstairs, which had been refitted just two years earlier.

On the snacks available, "There was no catering... With a Phillips microwave oven such successful items as hot dogs, which Odeon is using extensively, could have been made available..."

In Mr Cartledge's measured response to the report, he noted that the cinema had been modernised in November 1967 and that *The Daily Cinema* described "a remarkable transformation that has taken place in this long and narrow cinema". The 1921 decoration up to the circle front had been covered by curtaining, which went down to the stage, where there were screen tabs on a curved track. In later years one of the guide pulleys for the steel cable that drew the curtains failed and the cable cut clean through the track.

The ABC News of December 1967 reported on the opening of the modernised cinema. Alderman F Taylor remarked "...a new entrance, entrance hall, lounge foyer, toilet suites and a completely remodelled auditorium in deep blue and gold, [luxury] lounge seated in 36-inch spacings, carpeted in blue and black, exquisitely illuminated... The stalls area has of course been shortened by the new lounge foyer and toilet facilities and by the new concept of spacious seating."

Originally the Central was to have had an underground car park to service patrons, which was dropped before construction commenced.

In October 1971 a second screen was added using part of the area formerly used as the café and ballroom on the second floor over the front entrance. The main screen was subdivided in 1977 with a projection room constructed in the circle foyer, serving a new screen in the old circle. The original projection room in the circle wedge continued to serve the main screen in the stalls of the old Central. The cinema's name changed to Cannon, then MGM and then to 'new' ABC before all three screens closed on 22 March 1999. Demolished in 2003, there is now an Ibis hotel on the site.

In the 1969 article the cinema was given an overall score of 28 out of 40.

Taken from *Today's Cinema* issue 9747, additional information from *Cinema Treasures*.

Results so far –		
Essoldo, Dewsbury	}	87½ %
Essoldo, Cosham		
ABC, Norwich		86 %
Colony, Torquay		84 %
Embassy, Pett's Wood, Kent	}	80 %
Ritz, Crewe		
Cinecenta, Leicester		77½ %
Granada, Kettering		76 %
Classic, Portsmouth	}	75 %
Odeon, Bristol		
Odeon, Oxford St., Manchester		
Tower, Leeds		
Odeon, Sheffield		
Savoy, Brighton (re-visited)		70 %
Regent, Brighton		67½ %
Odeon, Salisbury		60 %
Picture House, Leicester		55 %
Odeon, New Street, Birmingham		52 %
Savoy, Brighton		42½ %

Good cinema Guide,
results so far.
ABC News, December 1967

THE ODEON PRESTON

By Ben Doman

Tim McCullen mentions in his article on the Gaumont Plymouth (*Bulletin* 56/2, p12) that it was subdivided around 1961/2 in the same way as the Gaumont/Odeon Preston. Here is a write-up of the Preston subdivision from the *Ideal Kinema* 7 February 1963.

A new Odeon theatre has just opened in Preston on the site of the old Gaumont. A Top Rank ballroom will be opened soon and the existing restaurant has been retained. Stephen Eastern, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, was the building contractor for the work. Welcome to the patrons starts outside the building, which has an outside illuminated panel bearing the words 'Top Rank Entertainment Centre'. In the entrance and available to passers-by as well as to patrons, is a gaily-coloured Presto Bar. Beyond the bar is a foyer, designed and decorated in contemporary style and fitted with a dual-purpose paybox and sales kiosk. The colour scheme in the foyer is turquoise and tangerine.



The auditorium of the new Odeon Preston

In the rebuilding, the entire auditorium of the old Gaumont was ripped out until only the shell of the four walls remained. Steel girders were then installed to carry a cinema at the level of the former circle: the ballroom being situated below, on the site of the former stalls. In the auditorium a new ceiling has been constructed of metal acoustic tiles with glass wool. The seating is tiered to give patrons the best of sight lines to the 50ft screen. The seats themselves are upholstered in blue and are generously spaced to give the maximum amount of legroom. Although it is smaller than it used to be (it has a seating capacity of 1,229) the auditorium of the new Odeon gives a remarkable impression of spaciousness. This has been achieved by the streamlining of the side walls, which sweep in unbroken lines to the simple, cut-out shape of the proscenium, which is both functional and unfussy.

The projection booth is equipped with Rank-Kalee Cinemeccanica all-purpose projectors. Sound equipment, designed and installed by Rank-Kalee, provides for full stereophonic reproduction, with six tracks for 70mm films and four tracks for 35mm. A special system has been incorporated in the auditorium to enable hard-of-hearing patrons to hear clearly from any seat in the theatre. {6542}



The façade of the Odeon Preston in September 2003

GONE WITH THE WIND

by Mike Whitcombe

Storms Dudley, Eunice and Franklin, which ravaged the United Kingdom during the third week of February 2022, left a terrible trail of devastation. Gale force winds ripped trees from the ground and sent brickwork flying from buildings before heavy rain and high tides caused rivers to break their banks and flood low-lying towns and villages. Winds howling along the English Channel touched a record 122mph by the time they reached the western tip of the Isle of Wight. A few miles north, the famous naval town of Portsmouth, somewhat sheltered by the Isle of Wight, received little serious damage. Winds were certainly strong and several roads, including the one along the seafront, were closed but most wind damage was superficial. One building which was affected was the former Odeon at Cosham, a northern suburb of Portsmouth that sits at the bottom of Portsdown Hill, which affords stunning views across the City, the Solent and the Isle of Wight.



The former Odeon, now a Crown bingo hall, had its canopy ripped off by a mighty blast of wind to reveal the **ODEON** lettering that lies beneath it, recalling fond memories for older residents who can still remember queuing outside to see the latest movie release. The cinema opened as the Ambassador to a loud fanfare, supplied by the Band of the Royal Marines based at nearby Eastney Barracks, on the evening of 8 March 1937. The guest of honour was the legendary British comedian Will Hay, who entertained the crowd after a speech by the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, Frank Spickernell. The opening night films were *Special Investigator*, a RKO Radio Picture romantic drama starring Richard Dix and Margaret Callahan that concerned a defence attorney punishing a racketeer who murdered his brother and *Dishonour Bright*, a British comedy directed by and starring Tom Walls about a man's good reputation becoming damaged when he's mistakenly named as a correspondent in a divorce case.



The Ambassador seated 1,645 – 1,124 in the stalls and 521 in the circle – and was equipped with a Compton 3 Manual / 8 Rank Theatre Organ with Grand Piano (the organ chamber was above the proscenium) and featured a first floor Tea Lounge with a sprung dance floor. It was designed in a smart art deco style by architect Frederick Charles Mitchell (1877-1965). He was the regular architect for London & Southern Super Cinemas Ltd, for whom the Ambassador was built. London & Southern were headed by Arthur Cohen. He allowed Oscar Deutsch's Odeon to acquire his twelve-cinema circuit just three months later. L&S, however, retained its separate identity as an Odeon subsidiary and none of the former L&S cinemas were renamed Odeon in Deutsch's lifetime. The Ambassador continued with its original name until 30 April 1945 when, under Rank ownership, Odeon lettering replaced all previous signage. The first film under the Odeon banner was *None but the Lonely Heart*, a RKO romantic drama with a social conscience starring Cary Grant as a young Cockney drifter. It was considered by many Hollywood critics as communist propaganda. The writer and director was Clifford Odets, the great radical American playwright, who had indeed been a member of the Communist Party during the 1930s. During the late 1960s and early 1970s the top end of Cosham High Street, where the Odeon is located, was redeveloped. Every building with the exception of the imposing Odeon was demolished and rebuilt. On 3 July 1976 Odeon decided films were no longer viable at this single-screen site and closed it. Bingo, in the shape of a Top Rank Bingo club, quickly replaced celluloid and forty-five years later it still flourishes, now under the Crown banner. Judging by the queues that gather most days at opening, the dear old Odeon is still a popular entertainment venue. Its success might now be because of lucky numbers rather than silver screen stars but the building is particularly well maintained and still a towering presence in Cosham.

Photos by the author, February 2022

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THE GAUMONT PLYMOUTH

By Roger Mcardell

I was just reading the article about the Gaumont Plymouth, written by Tim McCullen, in this month's Bulletin. In the article Tim asks the question "I wonder if the organ still exists and where it now resides". I'm delighted to say, I can shed some light on this:

When the building closed at the end of 1961, the organ was sold to organist Cecil Howett and installed in the Embankment Road Methodist Church. It was stripped of its traps and tuned percussion; the curved tops were chopped off and all the ornate mouldings removed. The stop layout was altered with the top layer removed completely. The horse-shoe and skirting board were cut down and even the second touch was removed. Luckily the pipework remained unaltered. Embankment Road eventually closed and the organ was transferred to Mount Gould, another Methodist church, a short distance away in Plymouth, where it stayed until 2005. With the style of church music changing and the organ beginning to deteriorate, the church decided to sell it.

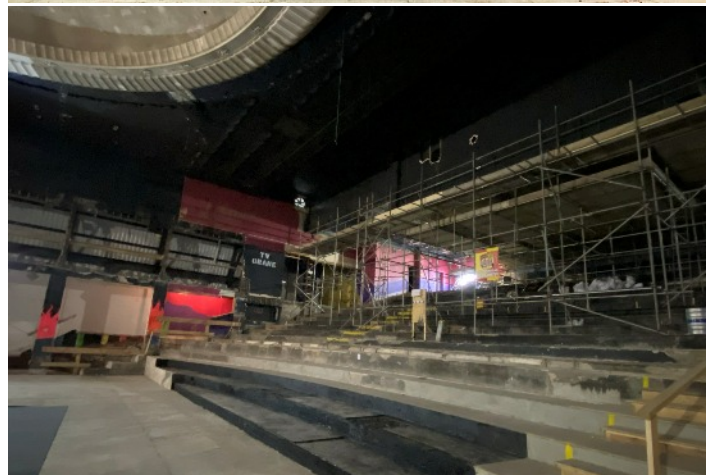


I acquired the organ in 2006 and set about a full refurbishment. I rebuilt the console exactly back to the original look, re-leathered all of the pneumatic motors, refinished all the woodwork and managed to replace all the missing tuned percussion, glockenspiel and xylophone. The organ is now fully playing; it is in nearly new condition and now lives in Langdon Hills in Essex.

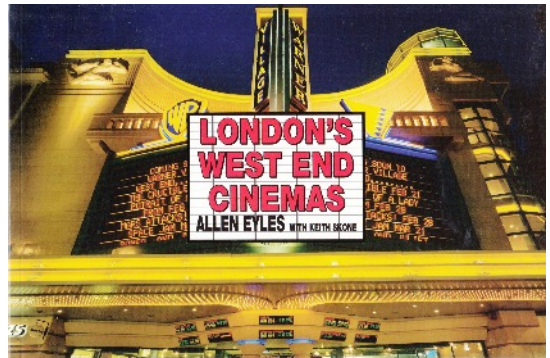
Sticking with the Gaumont, I was going to write to you for some help anyway. I had a tour of the building a few weeks ago and the owners asked if I could find out if anyone knew what the emblems around the dome mean? [R] Tim also asked if the cinema was still intact so I've attached pictures of this as well. [next column]

On the subject of the building itself, it is now owned by Nudge Community Builders, who are a local community organisation based in Union Street in Plymouth. The building was in the hands of God TV for a short period of time and they have pretty much stripped it bare. There is very little of the internal structure left now although the huge ceiling dome is still intact and looking great. If anyone is interested in a tour of the building, Nudge offer guided tours on a regular basis and these can be booked here:

www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/nudge-community-builders-16641033492



London's West End Cinemas by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.



The history of London's West End cinemas dates back more than one hundred years. This book details all of them, in chronological order, totalling well over one hundred, from 1906 up to 2013. The best of the West End's cinemas were outfitted to a very high standard to match their role as show-cases for new films, hosting press shows and premières, as well as 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 p6

MISCELLANY

CINEMAS LOOK TO IMPROVE SERVICE FOR DEAF PEOPLE



The galeri Caernarfon in July 2019

Film Hub Wales (FHW) and the Wales Council for Deaf People (WCDP) are working with seven Welsh cinemas, to establish D/deaf + volunteer groups who will help to improve cinema experiences for audiences with hearing loss, in their local communities. The venues are the Magic Lantern in Tywyn, Neuadd Dwyfor Pwllheli, The Torch Theatre Milford Haven, The Maxime Blackwood, Galeri Caernarfon, Chapter Cardiff and Theatr Gwaun Fishguard. After participating in training with the WCDP to explore how to meet the needs of cinema audiences with hearing loss, the cinemas will put exciting new activities in place.

Cambrian News – 31 March

AUCTION SALES

A rare autograph book signed by The Beatles at a gig at the Adelphi Slough sold for £3,800 at auction. It had been estimated to fetch between £3,500 and £4,500. The book also featured further autographs including The Rolling Stones and Dusty Springfield.

Slough Observer – 18 February; sent in by R David Simpson

The axe from the horror film *The Shining* has gone on sale for £45,000. The foam prop was used by Jack Nicholson in the 'Here's Johnny' door-smashing scene. It comes with a signed photo of the star.

Metro – 22 March; sent in by R David Simpson

Props from the 1987 cult film *Withnail and I* have fetched more than their reserves at auction. Top lot was a portrait of Clara Flower from 1872, which sold for three times its mid-estimate for £21,000. A tapestry sold for £13,000 but had been estimated at £2,000 to £4,000. The two famous sofas had been estimated at £4,000 to £6,000 but sold for £12,000 and £9,500. The total proceeds of more than £316,000 went to UK charities.

The Argus, Brighton – 2 March; sent in by Barry Quinton

Two first edition James Bond novels gifted by Ian Fleming to his real-life Miss Moneypenny have emerged for sale for an estimated £60,000. The signed editions of *Goldfinger* and *From Russia With Love* were presented to his secretary Una Trueblood. She worked for Fleming for 10 years until the early 1960s and typed up his original Bond manuscripts. She died in 2020 and her family have decided to sell the books.

Daily Express – 5 March; sent in by Barry Quinton

Sir Michael Caine [88] is downsizing and so put up for sale his collection of memorabilia. A gold Rolex sold for £125,250. A 1977 oil painting by English artist John Bratby, which was expected to fetch £3,000, sold for £31,500. A pair of specs, estimated at £400-£600 went for £16,500. A poster for *Zulu* made £11,500. Proceeds went to the NSPCC.

Daily Mirror – 4 March; sent in by Barry Quinton

† Big D Deaf people are those who are born deaf or experience hearing loss before spoken language is acquired and regard their deafness as part of their identity and culture rather than as a disability. They form the Deaf Community and are predominantly British Sign Language (BSL) users.

Small d deaf people are those who have become deafened or hard of hearing in later life, after they have acquired a spoken language and so identify themselves with the hearing community. Small d deaf people are more likely to use hearing aids and develop lipreading skills.

INDIANA JONES AND THE LOST PARTY

As no official party had been arranged to mark the end of filming on the new *Indiana Jones* film, star Harrison Ford paid for one himself. It was held at The Bike Shed in London's Shoreditch and had been nicknamed "Raiders of the Forbidden Bar" or "The Last Brewsade". UK locations used for filming included the North Yorks Moors Railway, Bamburgh Castle in Northumberland and Glencoe in the Scottish Highlands.

Daily Mirror – 3 March; sent in by Barry Quinton

KING'S SPEECH TAKES MOVIE CROWN

The moment King George VI delivers his wartime speech without stuttering has been voted the most iconic moment in the last 25 years of British movies. The finale of *The King's Speech* featuring Colin Firth narrowly beat Sir Ian McKellen as Gandalf saying "You shall not pass" in *The Fellowship of the Ring*. Fans quizzed on the eve of the BAFTA awards say their favourite BAFTA-nominated film is *Gladiator*. The best remakes were *A Star is Born* followed by *Ocean's Eleven* and *The Jungle Book*. The study also found that it takes the average person 16 minutes to decide on a new film. Many resort to old favourites, with the average person returning to a top title at least 12 times.

Daily Express – 12 March; sent in by Tom Laughlan

CINEMAS 'TWEAK' FILM TIMES TO MAKE US WATCH ADS



The thirteen-screen Odeon Leeds/Bradford in June 2005

Cinema bosses have been accused of making patrons watch around 30 minutes of adverts by publishing misleading start times. The *Daily Mail* tested five cinemas showing *Downton Abbey* – The Cineworld in Hengrove, Bristol, the Odeon Leeds/Bradford, Star City in Birmingham, the Curzon in Clevedon and the Empire Bishop's Stortford. There were between 22 and 28 minutes of adverts after the advertised start time before the feature commenced.

Daily Mail – date unknown; sent in by RW Hawkins

MORE CENSORSHIP

When Channel 5 showed the 1961 *Breakfast at Tiffany's* starring Audrey Hepburn, they cut every scene featuring co-star Mickey Rooney. His portrayal of Japanese character Mr Yunioshi has long been condemned as racist – he wore 'yellowface' makeup and buck teeth, taped his eyes and delivered his lines in an exaggerated accent. It was considered a crude characterisation at the time of the film's release but critics say this is a dangerous rewriting of history.

Mail on Sunday – 20 February; sent in by Barry Quinton

BBFC

"It's extremely rare for a film to be refused classification," says the BBFC's head of compliance, Craig Lapper. Since 2012 he has only refused to classify one title – a 'straight-to-Internet' film called *Hate Crime* because it focused on a group of people being racially abused and terrorised. The BBFC doesn't keep a definitive list of banned films because the titles they rejected back as far back as the 1910s and 1920s would probably pass muster today. The 21st Century UK banned list includes *The Human Centipede 2*, which was initially rejected but then passed with cuts, porn films *Lost in the Hood* and *The Texas Vibrator Massacre*, the jackass-style *Bumfights* and horror *The Bunny Game*. www.bbfc.co.uk

Metro – date unknown [possibly not recent]; sent in by Richard Hawkins

CINEMA BUSINESS

COUNCIL SELL-OFF



The ten-screen Odeon in Basingstoke is one of several 'out-of-area' properties to be sold by Slough Borough Council to reduce its £760m borrowing debt and its £479m black hole. The Council bought the cinema for £8.34m in 2019. It opened as a Warner Village in September 1990 and later became a Vue. Vue had to relinquish it when they acquired the Ster Century multiplex in 2003 and it was refurbished and became an Odeon in 2007. {24135}

Slough Observer, Slough Express – 11 March;
sent in by R David Simpson; photo taken May 2006

EVERYMAN

Losses for 2021 shrank significantly to £5.4m, from £20.1m in 2020. Last year all cinemas had 24 weeks of normal trading, nine weeks of reduced capacity and 19 weeks of full closure. The group has 36 venues and will open four more this year (Edinburgh, Plymouth, Marlow and Egham) with even more in the pipeline for 2023.

Daily Express, Daily Mail – 26 March; sent in by Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton

CINEWORLD

After nearly two years of Covid-19 disruptions, full year revenues have more than doubled to £1.37bn and pre-tax losses falling from £2.3bn to £666.7 million [another figure says £429m]. Admissions grew 75.2% to 95.3 million in 2021. However, it warned that the cost of servicing its borrowing was increasing. The chain has 751 cinemas around the world.

Sunday Express – 13 March, Daily Mail – 14, 18 March;
Daily Record, metro – 18 March; CityAM – 14, 31 March;
sent in by Margaret Burgoine, Tom Laughlan, Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

Cineworld has been handed a reprieve over the \$79m (£58m) it owes to former shareholders of the Regal cinema chain. It now has until the end of June to make the final payment, having previously faced a 31 March deadline. Cineworld bought Regal in 2018 for £2.7bn. However, a group of former Regal shareholders lodged a claim over the price they received and a court ruled in their favour. Cineworld agreed to pay out \$170m.

Daily Telegraph – 19 February; sent in by Barry Quinton

CINEWORLD BONUS

If you're struggling to find the money to pay your soaring energy bill you could apply for the post of Cineworld boss. Chief executive Mooky Greidinger earned £1.4 million during the last tax year, despite his company posting a pre-tax loss of around £542 million. The 69-year-old ensured he would receive a seven-figure salary thanks to a £646,000 bonus, which increased his earnings from £830,000 in 2020. Cineworld deputy chief executive Israel Greidinger, Mooky's younger brother, was paid £1.21 million compared to £689,000 in 2020, thanks to a £518,000 bonus. Cineworld, which has 9,500 screens across ten countries, has struggled financially during the pandemic – a fact not helped by their decision to keep their cinemas closed even when Government regulations said they could reopen. The huge bonus-inflated pay checks received by the Greidinger's, despite their company operating at a loss, has raised many eyebrows. With the firm £6 billion – yes, billion – in debt and with the former shareholders of cinema chain Regal, which Cineworld acquired in 2017, still waiting for money owed to them following the takeover, even Cineworld shareholders questioned the six figure bonuses.

Daily Mail – 8, 18 April; sent in by R David Simpson & Mike Whitcombe

CINEWORLD DAY

Cineworld held a special day on Saturday 26 February when tickets for all screenings were just £3! It applied to all formats, including IMAX, 4DX, ScreenX and Superscreen showings as well as regular 2D screenings. The promotion was also implemented at Picturehouse, which forms part of the same chain. To add to the festivities, some of the biggest blockbuster from 2021 were also shown, including *Dune* and *SpiderMan: No Way Home*. The event was to celebrate "the nation's love of cinema" and to help increase business after the pandemic.

Mail Online – 20 February

GIANT ADVERTISING



Ocean Outdoor has seen its £25m contract for advertising on the outside of the BFI IMAX in London's Waterloo renewed for another five years. photo taken September 2006

CityAM – 16 March; sent in by Tom Laughlan & R David Simpson

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LETTERS

GAUMONT PLYMOUTH

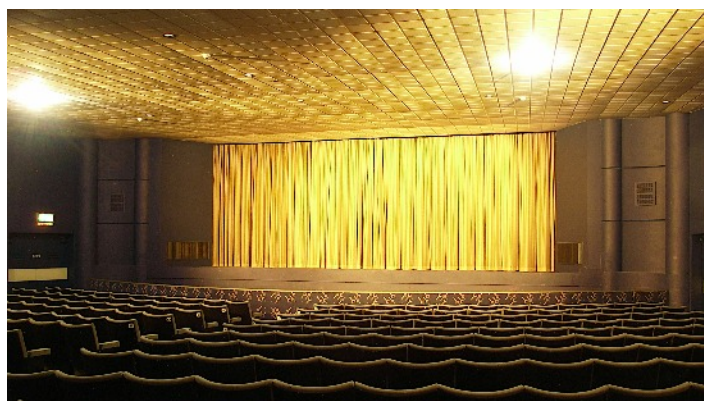
I can add a little more information to add to Tim McCullen's feature on page 12 of the last issue of Bulletin. When the cinema was divided in 1962 it was done laterally with a cinema retained upstairs, renamed as Odeon and the former stalls converted into a Top Rank Suite. The Suites were dual function venues combining function catering on some days and dancing on others, initially with live bands. The dressing rooms were converted into a small disco. The Suite only later became a nightclub.

Tony Williams

Editor's Note: See also the article on p21.

ODEON / EMPIRE SUTTON COLDFIELD

As a former Chief Projectionist at this cinema, I was interested to read the comments from Ben Doman about the dimmer board and the way it was wired with the mains voltage. Can I reassure readers that before any lamp was replaced in the houselights or cinema spots the main isolator switch was turned off in the switch room to the dimmer board making it safe to replace lamps with no chance of any electric shock. The drive motors for the levers were not experimental – they came from the Odeon Dudley after it closed and the roof void access back stage is part of the cinema's original 1936 design; a trapdoor would lead to the first level for checking the extract motor and another ladder would take you up to the stage end of the main roof void.



Screen ④ [pictured above in April 2007] was not a poor conversion – Andy Robertshaw, ex Odeon Engineer, who was working for Sound Associates, installed the sound system with Altec/JBL speakers back-stage; the sound was excellent with no acoustic problems. Throughout its life the Odeon Sutton Coldfield projection teams maintained a very high standard of presentation with sound and picture on the screen. In 2008 I was made redundant by Empire Cinemas – it was sad to leave a cinema that had been part of my life for 31 years. {15012}

Ian Green

CHRIS WOOLARD

In the last Bulletin Tom Laughlan writes that the picture of Chris Woolard in the previous Bulletin showed a Kalee projector that Chris had in his house. The picture, from 2018, actually showed the Kalee 21 being placed in the reception area of Elstree University Technical College by Chris and Nick Fyffe. The projector had been in use at the PPT's Enigma cinema at Bletchley Park. Chris did have a Cinemeccanica Vic 8 70/35mm projector at his home, together with a vast amount of other equipment that has passed to the PPT.

Ray Sutton

FILM CLASSIFICATION

I see from previous issues of the Bulletin that a film containing the N word is now classified by the BBFC, which again brings into question whether dealers that sell films to the public should also be subject to classification. Talking Pictures TV on terrestrial channels voluntarily classify old films, presumably to save complaints – yet their new computer channel www.tptvencore.co.uk shows completely uncensored films. There appears to be a conflict here. Perhaps it is time for all parties in the industry to get together to establish a common standard for film or television classifications.

Ian Patterson

Editor's Note: See also Miscellany p22.

BRITISH FILM STUDIOS

With news that what remains of Nettlefold Studios / Walton Studios about to be demolished, I notice that in Bulletin 48/1 (Jan/Feb 2014) Roy Dilley was advertising for a copy of the film *The Next Picture Show*. Perhaps he could let us know if he succeeded?

Richard Hawkins

Editor's Note: I contacted Mr Dilley and, yes, he did manage to get hold of a copy of that film – and it was the colour version!

PORTSMOUTH CINEMAS

Walking around the area I passed the booking address for South Downs Cinemas Ltd at 129 Victoria Road. It was on the same side of the road as the Plaza/Gaumont but the area has now been completely redeveloped. The booking office for Empire Cinema (Havant) Ltd at 5 King's Terrace has been replaced by a block of 1950s flats.

I thought this cutting might be of interest to members. The Rendezvous Art House cinema opened in 1984 in a 90-seat auditorium in the Hornpipe Arts Centre, not far from the Majestic and Shaftesbury cinemas. It had 35mm projection. In July 1992 it moved to a hall in the University but closed in November 1994. The building was originally an Oddfellows Hall and became the Regal Palace nightclub. It is now the Blue Water Rest Home. {64158}

Richard Hawkins

Editor's Note: Richard also asks about a Radio 4 programme *Last Word* broadcast on 18 & 20 March. He remembers something about a "dot-com millionaire who invented the system in a boiler room at the back of a cinema". I have listened to the program on BBC Sounds and I couldn't hear anything that answers that description. Does it ring a bell with any other member?



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.

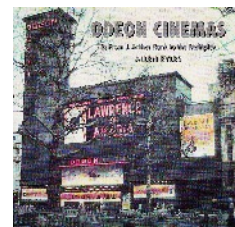
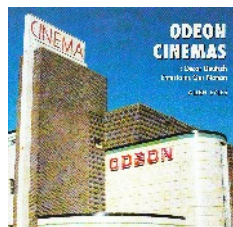
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Display rates: eighth page – £15; quarter page – £25;

half page (horizontal or vertical) – £45; full page – £80

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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.

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UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOS



No one was able to provide a name for the gentleman with the moustache featured on page 25 of the last Bulletin. Here is another image from the late 1950s at Bristol Odeon. Perhaps someone recognises the well-dressed ladies or the gentleman in the suit? If you have any suggestions, please contact the Archivist.

ARCHIVE TWITTER

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

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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

NECROLOGY

JUNE BROWN 95

June became a national treasure playing Dot Cotton in *Eastenders* since it started in 1985 until 2020. She joined the Wrens during WWII and worked as a projectionist showing training films for airmen. She received a BAFTA nomination for a monologue where she made soap history by single-handedly holding an entire episode.



ANNA KAREN 85

Anna was probably best known for playing Olive in *On The Buses* but she was also in *East Enders* on and off for 21 years. On the big screen she was in *Carry on Camping* (1969) where she met her best friend Barbara Windsor and in *Carry on Loving* (1970).



SALLY KELLERMAN 84

Sally was famous for playing the original Major Margaret 'Hot Lips' Houlihan in the 1970 film *M*A*S*H* alongside Donald Sutherland. She went on to star in *Lost Horizon* (1973), *Back to School* (1986) and *Prêt-à-Porter* (1995).



LYNDA BARON 82

Although best known for playing Nurse Gladys Emmanuel in TV's *Open All Hours* she also appeared in several films including the British horror *Hands of the Ripper* (1971), *Yentl* with Barbra Streisand (1983) and *Carry On Columbus* (1992).



VERONICA CARLSON 77

Veronica was the 'Queen of Scream' who helped to make Hammer House of Horror films such a success. Christopher Lee first sank his fangs into her in the 1968 classic *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* but she survived to star alongside Peter Cushing in *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* the following year.



JEREMY CHILD 77

Jeremy was the actor who came to mind whenever a play, television show or film called for an Englishman with a stiff upper lip and a public school accent. He appeared in many films, including *Young Winston*, *The Madness of King George* and *The Darkest Hour*, in which he played one of Churchill's ministers, Lord Stanhope.



WILLIAM HURT 71

William won an Oscar for his role in the 1985 film *Kiss of the Spider Woman* and was nominated for three further Academy Awards. His early parts included *Altered States* (1980) and *Gorky Park* (1983). He more recently played the US Secretary of State in two of the *Avengers* series.



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)

ASHFORD (Kent)

Ashford Borough Council is advertising for interested parties "who would like to bring something new to the High Street". This refers to the site of the former Odeon, where the façade will be retained but the auditorium will be demolished and replaced by a new extension that "provides a modern, flexible space, which will open up and enhance views to St Mary's Church". The Council's website has a downloadable 13-page brochure of the plans at tinyurl.com/ea34f35p.

Ashford Council website; sent in by Martin Tapsell

BELFAST

An £10.5 million plan to transform the former Debenhams store at CastleCourt into a new nine-screen Omniplex cinema and leisure hub has been approved, despite initial concerns from NI Water over wastewater capacity in the area. Wastewater treatment works in the area are due to be upgraded by July 2023. If NI Water withdraws its objections, work could start soon but if they are not completed by November 2022, they would have to be delayed to avoid interfering with Christmas trade, potentially pushing back opening until Easter 2023.

News Letter – 2 March

BIRMINGHAM (Central)

The Electric was forced to close for ten days over licensing issues, just a week after its grand reopening on 11 March. See p16 last Bulletin. {9559}

Birmingham Live – 1 March

BRENTWOOD (Essex)

The Council is in talks with a major cinema chain to bring a three-screen cinema to the Baytree Centre. The Council recently bought the centre for an undisclosed but significant sum.

Essex Live – 23 March

BRIGHTON

A developer has revealed its plans for the Grade II* listed Hippodrome. The rotting roof was replaced last October and the entire ground floor was shrouded in scaffolding to support the building whilst repairs were taking place. The next step is to replace the plasterwork. The owners have already invested over £1m to slow the building's decline and plan to invest a further £10m at the second stage. It is hope to reopen the building in 2024 as a multi-functional space. However, it is understood that the stage house does not feature in the plans so hopes of a live theatre may have been dashed. {36884}

The Argus, Brighton – 11 February; sent in by Barry Quinton

BRISTOL

The developer that bought the former St George's Hall / Granada in Redfield, has submitted a planning application to build 44 bedsits in the building. Local residents, who have been campaigning for the building to be put into community use are hoping that the Council will reject the application, saying it is "prison-like". The building was last used as a Wetherspoon's pub in the foyer only – the cinema is still hidden behind and could be restored. {27949}

Bristol Live – 23 March

BURY ST EDMUNDS (Suffolk)

We reported on p16 of the last Bulletin of plans for a four-screen Everyman in the basement of the former Debenhams store. The Town Council welcomed bringing the building back into use but objected on the grounds of noise and disturbance and the effect on the existing Abbeygate cinema. A local resident said the noise is already unbearable at times.

Suffolk News – 7 March; West Suffolk Mercury – 16 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock

CANVEY ISLAND (Essex)

We reported on p16 of the last Bulletin of the theft of a model of Star Wars character Yoda from the Movie Starr. It was anonymously returned on 4 March, exactly a month after it disappeared. The staff are delighted to have him back. {14619}

Basildon, Canvey & Southend Echo – 6 March

COLCHESTER (Essex)

The former Odeon in Crouch Street was due to go to auction on 13 April with a guide price of £2.5m. However, it was withdrawn prior to the sale and is now due to be auctioned in May. There have been numerous plans for the building since the cinema closed in October 2002, having opened in February 1931. {17575}

Essex County Standard – 24 March; East Anglian Daily Times – 15 April; auctioneers' website www.dedmangray.co.uk; sent in by Terry Hanstock

CORBY (Northants)



Planning permission has been given to demolish the auditorium of the former Odeon and build apartments and shops; the façade will be retained. It opened in March 1936 with 1,042 seats in stadium-style. It was taken over by an independent operator in January 1969 and renamed Rutland Cinema but closed in December the same year. It was last used as a furniture shop. {16655} photo taken February 2004

Northants Telegraph – 14 April; sent in by Chris Godbold & Trevor Haynes;

DAVENTRY (Northants)

Batman attended the opening night of the new four-screen Arc Cinema on 3 March after arriving in a life-size Batmobile. The seating capacities are: screen ① 77; screen ② 121; screen ③ 84; screen ④ 79. All auditoria have luxury electric recliner seating and there is the usual café/bar. {66730}

Northants Live – 7 March

DERBY

A planning application has been submitted to turn what I believe are the dressing rooms of the former Gaumont Palace at the rear of the building on Osmaston Road into a 10 bed HMO [House in Multiple Occupation]. The rooms are currently used by the staff of the restaurant, which occupies the main building. The HMO will be cut off from the restaurant so there will be no access to it. Planning application No 22/00482/FUL. {14897}

Derby Evening Telegraph – date unknown; sent in by Bob Taylor

DEVIZES (Wilts)

The Palace was taken over by Adam Cunard (of the Picturedrome Bognor Regis) at the beginning of 2019 with a promise of cheaper tickets and a complete makeover of the premises. Now he is applying for planning permission for a second-storey extension at the rear. If approved, it would provide a rehearsal area and changing area for the theatre/live acts. This will incorporate the stage/fly tower to be used as a 534-seat working theatre/cinema. {24666}

Gazette & Herald – 24 March; photo on front cover

Editor's Note: Although the Gazette & Herald report doesn't explicitly say so, it sounds as if the 1970s subdivision is being removed and a single space created. Can anyone confirm? I emailed the cinema for clarification but haven't had a reply.

DONCASTER (South Yorks)

Doncaster Council has launched a feasibility study into the potential reopening of the Grade II listed Grand Theatre following a grant of £11,500 from the Theatres Trust. It opened in March 1899 as a live theatre and had intermittent cinema use until it became a bingo hall in September 1961. The bingo operation closed in 1995 and the building has been empty since and on the Theatres Trust 'at risk' register from the time that started in 2006. {19936}

The Stage – 3 March; sent in by Barry Quinton;

DUDLEY

Plans for the demolition of the Hippodrome have been approved by the Council. They overturned a restrictive covenant on the site, preventing it from being used except for the purposes of leisure, retail or housing. It will be replaced by a nursing college for Worcester University, which is expected to be up and running by the 2024 academic year. {41631}

Express & Star – 25 March

GAINSBOROUGH (Lincs)



The makeover of the King's Theatre has almost finished. The building dates from 1885 and has been a theatre, cinema and bingo hall. When the bingo closed in 2016 it was bought by a local businessman and he has carried out most of the work himself. It is due to open later this year as a community venue. There are interior pictures on the BBC News website at [tinyurl.com/5f74dfa5](https://www.bbc.com/news/arts-5f74dfa5). {23864}

BBC News website – 15 April; photo taken June 2014

GLASGOW



The Grosvenor Cinema on Ashton Lane is seeking permission from Glasgow City Council to make alterations to its frontage. The cinema has been closed during the pandemic while refurbishment works have been carried out. The proposed changes would see a new revolving door created at the entrance to the cinema. A brass canopy overhead, showing what films are being screened and the timings, would be added, among other smaller changes. Each of the two screens on the ground floor has 104 seats; upstairs, the original ceiling has been restored and the space is now a restaurant. {27083}

Glasgow World – 8 April; photo taken November 2006

HARWICH (Essex)

The Grade II* listed Electric Palace reopened on 8 April after a two-year £1.5m restoration project. It first opened in November 1911 but closed in 1956. It lay derelict for 16 years but volunteers reopened it in 1981. It closed in 2019 for the restoration to remedy structural defects and a water leak and to remove asbestos. There was also redecoration of the interior, replacement of part of the auditorium floor and refurbishment of the auditorium seating. A more prominent celebration event will take place at a later date. The original restoration was covered in a special issue of *Picture House* No 37 (2012). {2597}

Essex County Standard, *BBC News website* - 31 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock & Robin Lee

LIPHOOK (Hants)

The 61-seat Living Room cinema was due to open on 22 April. It has been more than two years since work first began turning the former Anchor Garage in Liphook Square into a cinema and café/bar. www.thelivingroomcinema.co.uk

Farnham Herald – 27 February

LLANDUDNO (Conwy)



The Wetherspoons pub in the Grade II listed former Palladium was forced to close for ten days in March for repairs to the ceiling. Scaffolding was erected in the auditorium space. The cinema opened in August 1920 and closed in September 1999. It has been a Wetherspoons pub since August 2001. {22974}

North Wales Live – 16 March; photo taken July 2014

LONDON (Covent Garden)

The Garden Cinema opened on 15 March in Parker Street. There are 76 seats in screen ① and 40 seats in screen ②. It is planned to open a third screen with 60 seats in 2023. See visit report and pictures on p11. {66818} www.thegardencinema.co.uk

Garden Cinema Press Release; sent in by Terry Hanstock; *Time Out* – 22 March; *Islington Tribune* – 1 April; sent in by Tom Laughlan

LONDON (Dalston)

The Rio was transformed into a three-day Gotham City inspired experience for the new *The Batman* film. Guests were presented with a crime scene as part of a role-play experience where every audience member was a suspect. Participants were encouraged to interact with each other and the actors who took on the role of Gotham City's police force. The goal was to unravel a series of clues and challenges and solve a mystery. {10557}

Digital Cinema Report – 7 March

LONDON (Newham)



I haven't seen any local newspaper reports about it but the fourteen-screen Showcase cinema at Jenkins Lane, Newham in Barking is now closed and all signage has been removed. I don't know the date when it closed but I last went there early February to see *Nightmare Alley* and it was on 8 April that I passed by and saw it closed. I checked Newham Council's website and see that the owners, National Amusements Ltd sent a letter to the Council on 3 February 2022, explaining that it was no longer viable to keep the cinema open. The Council has received a planning application for the site, which involves demolition of the current buildings (cinema and restaurants) and for the construction of warehouses. Above is a photograph I took of the cinema site on 11 April. {21156}

Sent in by Doug Raynes

LONDON (New Cross)

The Curzon Goldsmiths closed permanently in 2021. The single-screen 101-seat cinema was on the Goldsmiths University campus. It opened in January 2016 and closed for the pandemic in early 2020. In July 2021 it was confirmed it would "no longer operate as commercially but would remain available for staff and students to book for internal academic and educational purposes." {51559}

News Shopper - 13 July 2021; sent in by Scott Kier

LUTON (Beds)



The foyer of the former Savoy/ABC appears to be in use as an information centre for the 'Luton 2040' regeneration project. Visit luton.gov.uk and search '2040'. I believe that the frontage has to be kept in any redevelopment because it is in the town centre conservation area. {6248}

Sent in & photo by Margaret Burgoine

MARGATE (Kent)

A half-mile stretch of decorative light bulbs was installed along the seafront for the making of the new Sam Mendes film *Empire of Light*, which also films at the Dreamland cinema. When shooting is finished, the lights will be gifted to the town so they will remain. {15123}

Kent On Line - 15 March; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & Philip Stevens

The Theatre Royal was due to close on 28 April and the Winter Gardens from 14 August whilst the future of both venues is examined. It has not been revealed how long the venues will be shut for but staff at the Theatre Royal say they are to be made redundant. They have formed a community events company in a bid to make sure shows continue and keep the venue open until its planned refurbishment under the £22.2million Town Deal fund. {25790}

Isle of Thanet News - 26 March; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

MATLOCK (Derbys)

We reported on p18 of the last Bulletin of plans for a two-screen cinema in the former Market Hall. Costs have surged by £380,000 to more than £2m, a rise of 45%. The increase is being blamed on the pandemic and Brexit. The project is not due to be open until summer 2023, having initially been due to open in time for Christmas 2021.

Derbyshire Live - 4 March

The Projected Picture Trust

Dean Clough Mills, HALIFAX, HX3 5AX

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

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

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

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

MERTHYR TYDFIL (Rhondda Cynon Taff)



The Grade II listed former Theatre Royal went to auction on 10 March with a reserve of nil. At 4pm the highest bid was £12,600 but after over an hour and a half of frantic bidding (212 bids in total) it sold for £107,100. There were 17 bidders altogether but for the last hour or so it came down to just two. The building opened in 1891 with 1,500 seats and a stage 28ft wide by 22ft deep. It was taken over by ABC in 1932 and by an independent operator in 1939. CinemaScope was fitted in 1955 and a new 38ft wide proscenium was installed. It closed in the late 1960s and bingo took over. That had closed by August 2009. The identity of the buyer and future plans for the building have not been disclosed. {42572}

Business News Wales - 30 March; photo taken August 2007

NEWMARKET (Suffolk)

Plans have been put forward by the Jockey Club for a three-screen cinema in the subscription rooms of what was formerly the Horseracing Museum.

Suffolk News - 1 April; sent in by Terry Hanstock

NOTTINGHAM (Mapperley)

Plans have been submitted for three blocks of apartments on land next to the Grade II listed former Majestic. The plans propose to retain the cinema and build one apartment block next to it and two more behind it, without damaging the cinema's "image nor its integrity". The website tinyurl.com/5n6fztrw contains an aerial photo of the cinema. See photo p6 last Bulletin. {45066}

West Bridgford Wire - 21 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock

NOTTINGHAM (St Ann's)



The cash and carry business in the former Cavendish in St Ann's Well Road has ceased trading after 28 years. The cinema opened in December 1938 with 1,666 seats. Films ceased in September 1968 and bingo took over until 1991. {36928}

Nottinghamshire Live - 16 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken May 2006

OSWALDTWISTLE (Lancs)

We reported on p18 of the last Bulletin that the former Palladium was to be auctioned with a guide price of just £50,000. Well, it actually sold for £232,000! The identity of the buyer or their plans for the building have not been revealed. {18512}

Lancashire Telegraph - 9 March; sent in by Philip Crompton

OSWESTRY (Shropshire)

The former owner of the Regal, Trevor Harris, says a planned reopening by the Council would not be viable: "It would cost a huge amount of money and not draw in the number of customers needed to make a profit. Alterations made when the building was converted into a shop in 2004 would need to be reversed and because of the changes the screen would be small." See p19 last Bulletin. {28606}

Oswestry Advertiser – 16 March; sent in by John Powell

PAIGNTON (Devon)

The 450-seat Grade II* listed Paignton Picture House has been given a grant of nearly £3m from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. The Trust that is restoring the building said this puts it on target to reopen in 2025. The trust aims to submit full planning applications this summer, with work starting on site in 2023. {22124}

BBC News website – 12 March

PITSEA (Essex)

At a judicial hearing in February, the owners of the former Century were ordered to either demolish or develop the site. The building closed on bingo in 2009 and soon squatters took over. There was a fire in September 2019 and the building is derelict. A local councillor wants to see a museum or art gallery in its place. {28704}

Basildon, Canvey & Southend Echo – 11 March; sent in by Margaret Burgoine

PLYMOUTH

The Council, which owns the freehold of the former ABC/Reel, has signed a conditional agreement with the long leaseholder to rejuvenate the site. Existing subdivisions will be removed and the main auditorium reopened as a live entertainment venue with a capacity for 1,000 people. The building opened in July 1938 and was subdivided into three cinemas and bingo in May 1977. The cinemas closed in February 2019. {24749}

Plymouth Live – 18 March

PORTSMOUTH



The Majestic Picture House on Kingston Road opened on 5 December 1921 so celebrated its 100th birthday at the end of last year. It initially had rear projection. It later became the Essoldo/Classic and closed in December 1973. It was subsequently used for snooker and a bar. The building is still there but with a crumbling façade and looking very forlorn. {46973}

Sent in by Richard Hawkins; photo taken May 2006

PRESTON (Lancs)

Plans have been approved for the new £40m development called Animate on the site of the former indoor market. It will include an eight-screen cinema. No operator or time scale have been given.

Insider Media – 1 April

PWLLHELI (Gwynedd)

The Neuadd Dwyfor reopened on 10 March after a £900,000 refurbishment. New seating has been installed in the auditorium and upper balcony with 222 seating capacity, including two designated wheelchair spaces. It will host both film and live performances. {26642}

North Wales Chronicle – 9 March

RAMSGATE (Kent)

Organisers estimate some 1,000-plus people turned out on 15 March for a demonstration in support of Kent Film Foundation's bid for the Granville Theatre in Ramsgate. The demo included a 'wraparound' of the building with those gathered surrounding its perimeter more than once over. The submission from Kent Film Foundation was rejected as not meeting the relevant criteria and the site is now being advertised on the open market – although Thanet Council says the Foundation has time to resubmit a proposal. More than 5,000 people have signed a petition in support of the bid. There would have been two cinema screens and new theatre space. The Council owns the freehold of the Granville but the site has been closed since the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020. The property is an Asset of Community Value. See photo p26 Bulletin 55/5. {15019}

Isle of Thanet News – 16 March; The Stage – 24 March; sent in by Margaret Burgoine & R David Simpson

REDCAR (Cleveland)

The Council has confirmed that tendering is underway to operate the new £9.6m three-screen Regent. It is being built on the seafront to replace the previous cinema of the same name, which had to be demolished due to structural defects. Eight or nine firms have said to have shown interest. Construction is due to be completed by the time you read this, with a view to opening in the summer.

Evening Gazette, Teesside – 12 February

ROTHERHAM (South Yorks)

Not a single brick has yet been laid for the new eight-screen Arc cinema on Forge Island but the chosen operator has already applied to the Council for a premises licence. Plans show five screens with between 125 and 143 seats and three smaller screens of between 50 and 83 seats. It is expected that construction will start in October 2022 allowing practical completion and handover to tenants for fitting out by January 2024.

Rotherham Business News – 14 April; sent in by Terry Hanstock

STAFFORD

The former Sandonia was sold in February for £350,000. Conservationists are worried that it might be demolished; there are reports that machinery has moved back onto the site. The new owner says he will not demolish it without proper planning permission – he intends to build small houses with gardens, not apartments. Meanwhile, cinema enthusiast Andy Jones, who built a replica ABC cinema in his back garden, has offered to move the façade of the building brick by brick and re-erect it elsewhere, saving it for future generations. {37530}

Express & Star – 2 March, 8 April

TORQUAY (Devon)



The four-screen Central closed on 16 March and will relocate to a new thirteen-screen cinema being built in the former BHS store; the first three screens opened on 15 April. The old building has been purchased by an anonymous benefactor and gifted to a local theatre company, The Unleashed Theatre Company. It will thus return to its original theatrical use before it became a full-time cinema in March 1933. Screen ① will be the new theatre, screen ② will be the community arts centre and it is hoped that screens ③ and ④ will become office spaces and dressing rooms. {25409} photo taken August 2003

BBC News website – 9 April; Devon Live – 15 April; sent in by Ken Roe

TUNBRIDGE WELLS (Kent)

The latest plans for the site of the former ABC (etc) are for a retirement village. It includes a gym and swimming pool but there is no mention of a cinema. The ABC closed in 2000 and was demolished in 2014. The site has had a succession of owners.

Kent On Line – 6 April; sent in by Philip Stevens

ULVERSTON (Cumbria)



The Roxy Collective was formed in April to purchase the Roxy building and maintain the cinema and the Laurel and Hardy Museum, which share the premises. Ulverston Town Council granted The Roxy Collective the sum of £50,000 towards the project, which is just over a quarter of the asking price. They are “blown away” by the level of donations to a fundraising campaign, which exceeded its £20,000 target in two weeks. See photo p20 last Bulletin. {18520}

Westmorland Gazette – 7, 12, 14, 21 April; Cumbria Crack – 12 April; North West Evening Mail – 19 April; sent in by Philip Crompton & Terry Hanstock; interior photo taken on CTA visit June 2008

WAKEFIELD (West Yorks)

Demolition of the former Regal/ABC was scheduled to start in April and take around twelve weeks. The cinema first opened in 1935 but has stood empty for two decades before being purchased by the Council in 2020. Some neighbouring properties, dating from the 1950s, will be demolished later this year having “reached the end of their lifespan”. The overall site will then be put on the market for a developer to buy and then build new homes. {3787}

Wakefield Express – 22 March; Yorkshire Post – 23 March

INTERNET CORNER

- ★ youtu.be/aZ5HRaMkRE0 A selection of Odeon First Choice trailers from the mid-1980s, supposedly based on the Odeon Harrogate.
- ★ youtu.be/hzZ5rPWAC_c A 12-minute video of the 1935 Silver Jubilee in London's Stepney, featuring the Ben Hur cinema at the start and again from 8:05. {15214} sent in by Gary Donaldson
- ★ tinyurl.com/yc24ue7n From Historic England – A new Aerial Photo Explorer; over 400,000 aerial photos via a clickable map.
- ★ www.tptvencore.co.uk – the ‘catch-up’ channel for Talking Pictures TV. Registration is simple.
- ★ tinyurl.com/3nv7p6us A page from the Ipswich Star about the former ABC Ipswich - 7 photos. {27957} sent in by Terry Hanstock
- ★ tinyurl.com/5erk5b5s From the ‘gasholder’ website - a history of the Scala Kings Cross. {2498} sent in by Terry Hanstock
- ★ tinyurl.com/46yyr3h6 From Business Insider India: 21 celebrities The Queen has met during her 70-year reign.
- ★ tinyurl.com/2s3e66y6 From Wales On Line – 25 pictures of former cinemas in Wales.
- ★ tinyurl.com/mr2ffst5 The IanVisits website on Hunt's Court in London, an alley between Leicester Square and Charing Cross Road. Mentions the Alhambra, the Cameo and the Odeon.
- ★ tinyurl.com/3tzm6bt3 From msn travel – 26 photos of some of the world's abandoned cinemas; nine of them are in the UK.
- ★ tinyurl.com/36yt3a76 From the Liverpool Echo – Merseyside cinemas that were loved but have now been consigned to history
- ★ tinyurl.com/2p8k9swv From Cheshire Live – photos of the three-screen Curzon Knutsford, formerly the Marcliffe. {24795}

WHITEHAVEN (Cumbria)



The Gaiety has celebrated its 100th anniversary. It first opened in April 1922 with 1,030 seats in the stalls and 450 in the balcony. In 1980 it was split horizontally with a 264-seat cinema in the circle and bingo in the stalls. The cinema section closed in 2003 whilst bingo continued downstairs but it reopened in October 2015. {3134}

In Cumbria – 13 April; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken June 1999

Late News

OXFORD

The Ultimate Picture Palace first opened in February 1911 and is up for sale after its last owner died in 2018. About 312,000 community shares will be up for sale from 29 April over nine weeks. Typically, investors will need to pay for at least 50 shares, with each costing £1, to become a shareholder but a discounted minimum buy-in of 30 shares will be available for potential shareholders aged between 16 and 29 who have an OX1, OX2 or OX4 postcode. {19416}

BBC News website – 22 April; sent in by Terry Hanstock

MEMBERSHIP

NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new members: Christina Horsepool, Alexander Orme and Sophie Wardman.

DONATIONS

Once more members have displayed their generosity by adding a donation to the renewal of their subscriptions. Our sincere thanks go to: G Balmer, WA Bates, PT Bayley, PJ Bennett, P Beresford, DP Brown, PJ Chester, SA Christie, P Cooper, GE Cranch, PJA Ferrari, PH Garrick, GC Gibson, A Goodwin, E Griffiths, RP Hagon, CE Hide, CJ Ingram, DJ Kay, M King, JM Knight, RC Lobb, A Maltby, PV Marie, RL Maudsley, AE McCann, TD Mills, N Pemberton, JW Perkins, R Pilbeam, JE Prickett, DP Rees, PJ Roberts, NJ Ruben, JM Seligmann, RJ Thompson, CW Turner, DA Warner, GJ Wheeler, J & JM Wootton and MJT Yallop.

IN MEMORIAM

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

Keith Briggs from Haxby, Yorkshire, a member since 1984 and Ken Reeves from Dagenham, who joined in 1998.

Ray Ritmeester, Membership Secretary

OUR NEW PATRON

We are pleased to announce that Michael Darvell has accepted our invitation to become a patron of the Association.

Michael is a founder member of the CTA along with fellow patron Allen Eyles. He was editor of *What's on in London* over a long period and has been an influential member of the prestigious Critics Circle Film Awards. He remains active in film and entertainment media; being a contributor to *Film Review Daily* and *Musical Theatre Review* as well as editor of *Film Review Annual*. We very much welcome Michael as our new patron.



Adam Unger, CTA Secretary

THE CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

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

Profit and Loss Account for the period from 1st March 2021 to 28th February 2022	Turnover	2022	2021
		£	£
	Members' subscriptions	26,276	25,406
	Members' payments for visits and events	3,366	255
	Income from sales	2,179	4,459
		31,821	30,120
	Cost of memberships		
	Cost of CTA Bulletin	17,753	16,408
	Cost of Picture House	4,424	5,578
	Cost of sales	112	2,257
	Cost of visits and events	384	511
		22,673	24,754
	Gross profit	9,148	5,366
	Other income		
	Donations	3,525	5,504
	GiftAid on subscriptions and donations	4,837	5,137
	Legacies	2,000	35,409
		10,362	46,050
	Administrative expenses		
	Archive costs	12,201	11,876
	Casework costs	12,949	11,519
	Other costs	5,140	10,297
		30,290	33,692
	Operating surplus/(deficit)	(10,780)	17,724
	Interest receivable	1,618	2,619
	Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities	(9,162)	20,343
	Change in value of book stock	(1,323)	(1,937)
	Overall Surplus/(deficit) for period	(10,485)	18,406
Balance Sheet as at 28th February 2022		2022	2021
		£	£
	CURRENT ASSETS & LIABILITIES		
	Book stock at Director's valuation	10,146	11,469
	Cash at Bank	154,362	163,524
	M&G Charibond (at net cost)	49,419	49,419
	NET CURRENT ASSETS	213,927	224,412
	RESERVES		
	Current assets brought forward at 1st March	224,412	206,006
	Surplus (deficit) for current period	(10,485)	18,406
	TOTAL RESERVES AT 28th FEBRUARY	213,927	224,412

PROVISIONAL : This statement has been prepared to give members information on the financial position of the Association.

The full accounts have been approved by the CTA's Directors at a Zoom meeting held on 5th April 2022.

The accounts still await approval of our Chartered Accountant.

However the fully detailed accounts, as presented to members at the CTA AGM, will be in the members' area of the CTA website in due course.

AN ODEON ODDITY – THE GREAT MR HANDEL

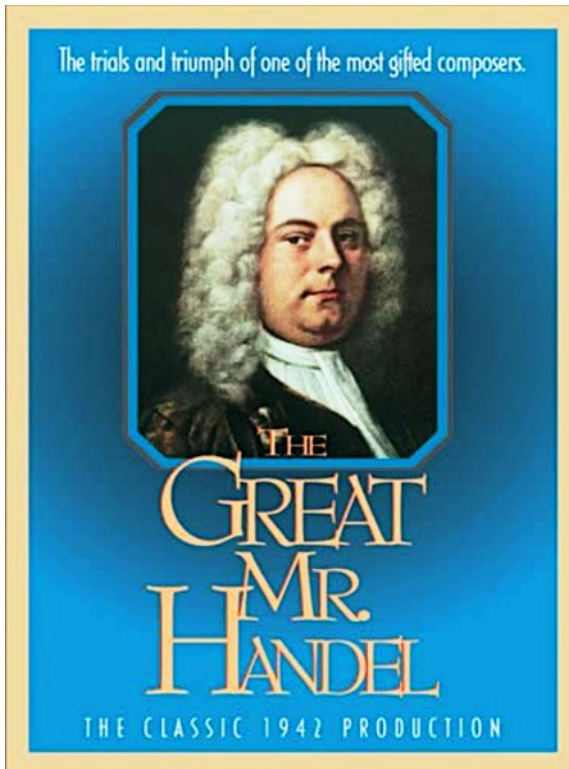
By David Evans

In an era when cinemas would be jammed-packed for practically anything being screened, one British film of 1942 certainly had the opposite effect on audiences – *The Great Mr Handel* made by GHW Ltd, a production company owned by J Arthur Rank and released on to his Odeon circuit towards the end of that year. This was the first Technicolor feature to be made in Britain since the Korda super productions of the late 1930s and looked at three aspects of Handel's life – success in earlier years, failure in later years and then the triumph of his oratorio *Messiah*.

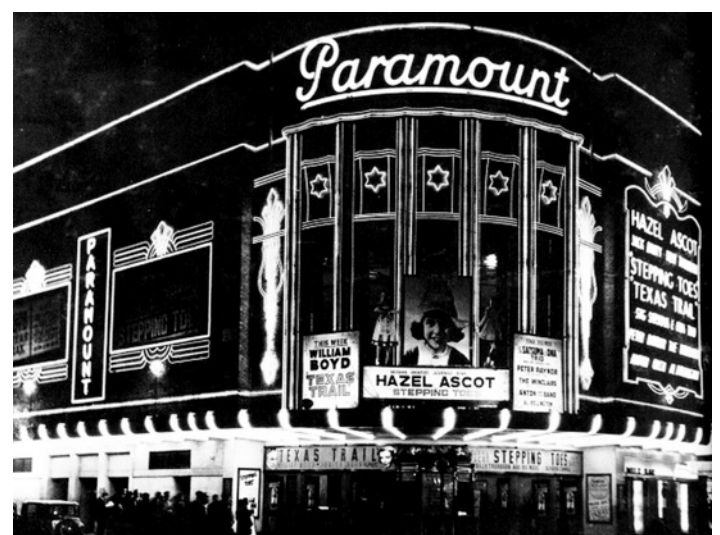
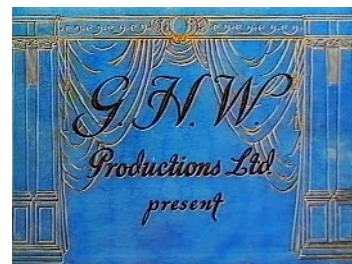
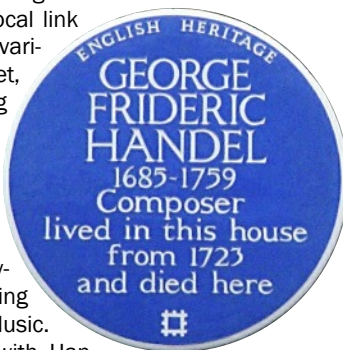
GHW specialised in films with a spiritual message – Rank was a practising Methodist – of somewhat limited appeal to many in the average cinema audience, so expensive Technicolor may have been used to bolster the picture's chances at the box office and, to improve these even more, a concert of Handel's music was performed at the Leicester Square Theatre, where the film premiered and HMV reissued recordings of his works – all to little avail. So, to improve its chances and “spice-up its appeal” *The Great Mr Handel* was coupled with a reissue of *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*, a 1938 a French Riviera-set comedy directed by Ernst Lubitsch and starring Claudette Colbert and Gary Cooper for its London-wide release. To demonstrate how unsuccessful this was, when the double bill hit the Rank-owned Paramount Tottenham Court Road in November it was replaced, quickly, by *Are Husbands Necessary?* and *The Fleet's In* the following week; both light-hearted escapist items, more certain to fill the 2,500-plus seat Paramount than a film with little popular appeal, even if it was in Technicolor.

Looking at the film, recently, I asked myself, was it such a bad picture or was it a case of the wrong film at the wrong time? True, it is occasionally slow-moving and the dialogue is somewhat stilted in some scenes but there is a charming vocal link between a number of these when various street sellers on Brook Street, Mayfair, where Handel lived [R], sing about their wares as they go about their business. In fact, the other music in the picture is superb – all Handel, of course and played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under the direction of Ernest Irving, who was loaned to Rank by Ealing Studios where he was Director of Music.

Musically, everything culminates with Handel's composition of his *Messiah* when Technicolor brings to life the various stages of Christ's ministry as they pass through Handel's imagination while he composes. The camera was in the hands of colour-cinematography pioneer Claude Friese-Greene, son of the earlier cinema pioneer William Friese-Greene and Jack Cardiff, who would go on to win an Oscar for his Technicolor work on *Black Narcissus* in 1947. Their work is especially notable during interior scenes where the somewhat flat, overall lighting used in Technicolor productions up to that date was modified to achieve a more “natural” effect. Sadly, Friese-Greene died in 1943 and in May of the same year *Kiné Weekly* reported that the Association of Cinematograph Technicians had put in a request for higher pay when working on Technicolor pictures, due to “mental strain” and *The Great Mr Handel* was cited as an example of such strain. Doubtless there was some truth in all this for at the time using Technicolor was a complicated process with much extra lighting involved, cumbersome cameras, shortages of Technicolor stock and worries about colour compatibility, the latter under the hawk-eyed supervision of the company's representative assigned to each picture.



Another minus point for average audiences of the time was the lack of any romantic interest in the picture. Wilfred Lawson, who played Handel, was a fine actor who, despite battles with alcoholism throughout his career, delivered well-received performances in most of the films he made but he was no matinée idol in the looks department. The role of Elizabeth Allan, who took the female lead, is simply that of a diva who performed in his operas and oratorios. Those Odeon picture-goers who did see the production must have noted the contrast between the worthy *The Great Mr Handel* and the lively Technicolor musical *My Gal Sal*, with glamorous Rita Hayworth, which played on the circuit just before it. In addition, they only had to wait for a couple of weeks more before Paramount's Technicolor *The Forest Rangers* made it to their local Odeon screens. Not only did this have Paulette Goddard, Susan Hayward and Fred MacMurray but it featured a hit song, *I've Got Spurs That Jingle, Jangle Jingle* and it is a sure bet that 1942 Odeon audiences found that catchy number much more to their taste than eighteenth-century classical music – however worthy – in an oddity like *The Great Mr Handel*.



The Paramount Tottenham Court Road, London in September 1938
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