



CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

[www.cta-uk.org](http://www.cta-uk.org)

# BULLETIN

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January – March 2023



The Ritz Rushden (Northants) where bingo has closed – see Newsreel p23; photo taken February 2004



The Adelphi in Attercliffe [Sheffield] which has been bought by the Council and will be renovated – see Newsreel p23; photo taken February 2005



## FROM YOUR EDITOR

You may have noticed on the front cover that the date of this edition is given as January – March instead of January/February. Reluctantly, your Committee has decided to reduce the number of Bulletin issues from six to four per year. There are two reasons for this. The first is financial. It costs more to post the Bulletin to you than it does to print it! Reducing the number of issues will save the CTA several thousand pounds a year. The second is that I have tendered my resignation as Bulletin editor after 24½ years. As nobody has come forward to take on the mantle, we are going to have to make emergency plans, including some professional input. This, of course, will incur costs but the savings from having fewer issues will help. The next Bulletin will be the last one I will do and further information will be provided then.

Many thanks to David Evans for the article *Royalty Goes to the Pictures* on the back page. When I sent the proof to David for checking, he commented that the photo I found of the King and Queen showed them to be a bit overdressed for the one-and-nines! He also mentions a Royal visit to Denham Studios to see the filming of *In Which We Serve*. By coincidence, this is the film showing at the Regent in the jigsaw below, which we bought for £3 from a charity shop. I suspect it is not a real cinema but does anyone think they recognise a cinema that might have inspired the artist? The bus is going to Hinksey, which is a collection of villages near Oxford. The only Regent I can find in that area is at Wantage – but it's not that. The jigsaw is simply titled *1940's High Street* – and has a piece missing! It only remains for me to wish you all a Happy New Year. There is a suitable graphic on p19.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



## Quick Guide to CTA Social Media



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[www.instagram.com/cinematheatreorguk](https://www.instagram.com/cinematheatreorguk)



[www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk)



Zoom talks and presentations platform

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[info@cta-uk.org](mailto:info@cta-uk.org) : general enquires  
Amazon Smile link : [smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1100702-0](https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1100702-0)  
Visits' registration phone hotline: 020 8800 8393

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE**  
**MONDAY 20 MARCH**

## CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of  
cinema buildings

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

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It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise;  
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Please state if you require items to be returned and enclose SAE,  
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# VISITS AND EVENTS

## A History of Belfast Cinemas

by Dr Sam Manning (Zoom Talk No 21)

**Saturday 4 February at 5:30pm (UK time, log-in from 5:15pm)**

Continuing the CTA's Zoom talks in 2023, we commence with Belfast, which will particularly appeal to our members who participated in the group visit in 2014 to explore the cinemas of 'Belfast and Beyond'.

From the earliest screenings in converted Victorian buildings to huge inter-war art deco picture palaces, post-war venues such as Queen's Film Theatre and finally to modern-day multiplexes, Belfast's colourful cinema exhibition history is celebrated in this well-illustrated talk.

Examining the development of the City's exhibition industry as the number of cinemas increased to 16 at the outbreak of the First World War and then to 26 by 1920; it also looks at how exhibitors navigated difficult political circumstances during the 1920s before expanding in the 1930s with larger cinemas located on the main arterial roads leading away from the City centre. While the development of cinema building in Belfast was similar to many other locations in Britain and Ireland, this talk will consider the prominence of local chains, such as Curran Theatres and Irish Theatres, alongside the work of celebrated Ulster architect John McBride Neill.



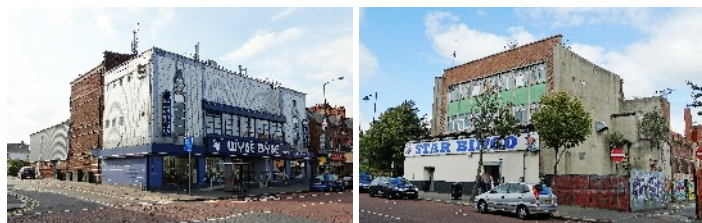
Strand (ABC) cinema, Hollywood Road, Belfast, c1959

After covering the WWII years and the impact of the 1941 Belfast Blitz on the City's 39 cinemas, the new builds of the 1950s, the cinema decline of the 1970s, exacerbated by the Troubles, we will come up to date, focusing along the way on the rise of multiplexes and a discussion of Belfast's surviving cinema heritage.

Our speaker, Dr Sam Manning, received his PhD from Queens University Belfast in 2017. He subsequently published his first book, titled *Cinemas and Cinema Going in the United Kingdom: Decades of Decline, 1945-1965* (see Publications p8) and has written widely on Northern Ireland's cinema history.

### ZOOM TALK TICKETS:

Members £3, Non-Members £5. (For Booking See Below)



The former Ambassador [L] and Gaiety [R] Belfast in 2014

## Join Us for a 'Double Bill' of Talks

**Saturday 11 February at 5:30pm (doors open 5:00pm)**

This postponed event has now been rescheduled as above. If a rail strike on this date causes a further postponement, all bookings will be fully refunded. Please book in advance using TicketSource as the preferred method or, if unable to do so, call the Visits' Hotline (020 8800 8393) to reserve a place.

### THE NATIONAL FILM THEATRE / BFI SOUTHBANK

An illustrated talk by Allen Eyles



Telekinema, precursor to National Film Theatre on Southbank

Allen will discuss the history of the National Film Theatre (NFT) since its inception as the 'Telekinema' on the Southbank in 1951, resulting from the Festival of Britain. A successful campaign for a permanent venue prevented it from being closed. It underwent several changes and extensions including being rebranded as the BFI Southbank in 2007 when it formed a working relationship with the BFI. Appropriately, it is also the venue where the CTA was founded in 1967.

Our speaker Allen Eyles is a celebrated author of many books associated with film and cinema history and is a founder member and patron of the CTA.

\*\*\* PLUS \*\*\*

### WHEN CINEMA LET IN THE LIGHT (II)

An illustrated musical talk by Martin Cleave

After delighting the CTA audiences with the first part of his celebration of light orchestral music's contribution to the cinema-going experience of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, Martin returns with more choice examples of music to help you reminisce about the glory days of cinema. Recreating examples using historic recordings, this presentation will feature luminaries from the world of light music whose careers provided part of the distinctive sound of cinema. From the orchestras of the silent era to the music and organists of the super cinemas, accompanied by images of historic picture palaces where these musicians performed.



Sidney Torch was a leading musician, organist and composer of the cinema era

Martin, who is Pianist and Music Director at the Royal Academy of Dance and has a lifelong interest in cinema history, will share his finest rediscoveries with us.

**Venue:** The Gallery, Alan Baxter Associates, 75 Cowcross Street, Farringdon, London EC1M 6EL

**Getting there:** On leaving Farringdon (old) Underground station (not the Turnmill Street exit) turn left – or when leaving Farringdon main-line (new) station, turn right - walk east 150 yards towards the 'Snappy Snaps' shop. The entrance to the Gallery is opposite; walk through the large gates, across the courtyard to the far end, turn right down the steps and you're there!

**Tickets:** £12 per person, includes a glass of wine or a soft drink.

**Book On-Line:** Please see box at bottom previous column.

### BOOKING YOUR TICKET

CTA Zoom talks and meetings are open to everyone – members and non-members alike.



Booking is done on-line using TicketSource: [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk). Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre' into their Search Box.

For Zoom talks please ensure that you complete the registration link that accompanies your TicketSource confirmation.



## COMING SOON

### IMPORTANT NOTICE

Visits and Events information will in future be published on the CTA Website [www.cta-uk.org](http://www.cta-uk.org). Details will also be included in the Bulletin if the new quarterly publishing dates allow.

**Don't Miss Out** – Members' first port of call for Events details will be the website and this will also be carried via the CTA's social media (Facebook) and the CTA's e-Newsletter service. If you are not already subscribed to the e-Newsletter service, it is strongly suggested that you do so via the website.

The following events are in the planning stage with possible confirmation and booking only by using the above methods.

*Ray Ritmeester, CTA Visits' Organiser. Email: [visits@cta-uk.org](mailto:visits@cta-uk.org)*

### Barbican – Let's Be Brutal About It!

**March 2023 – organised by Marion Kennett**

The CTA is organising a visit to the cultural hub of the City of London to tour the Barbican Art Centre's theatre and cinema/s and the adjacent Guildhall School of Music and Drama's Milton theatre and concert hall. The Barbican complex is of course noted for its 1960's brutal architecture and is Grade II listed.



Barbican cinema screen ① auditorium

### Astoria Finsbury Park

**April 2023 – organised by Ray Ritmeester**



A return to Finsbury Park, principally to visit the magnificent Astoria, now the UCKG church, which, it has to be said, has maintained the building excellently. This and its sister in Brixton have the best Atmospheric style interiors in Britain and are rightly listed at the Grade II\* level. Both were designed by Edward Stone in collaboration with Thomas Somerford and Ewen Barr. At Brixton, dating from 1929, the approach is Italianate but at Finsbury Park, opened a year later, it is Spanish – a 'Hispano-Mooresque fantasy', as it has been described. The amazing thing is that both auditorium schemes sprang forth with scenographic buildings fully realised in three dimensions and completely convincing in conception, as though the architects had experienced the real John Eberson Atmospherics in the USA built during the 1920s – but perhaps they did? The Finsbury Park Astoria is also a planning miracle, with the entrance routes cleverly winding their way from the rotunda foyer to the auditorium, around Victorian terrace housing behind. An additional attraction will be the nearby Picture-House cinema opened in 2021.

*Richard Gray*

### BOOKING YOUR TICKET



CTA visits are open to everyone – members and their guests are welcome.

Booking is done on-line using TicketSource: [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk). Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre' into their Search Box.

## OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

not organised by the CTA

### REGENT CHRISTCHURCH TOURS

'Behind the Scenes' tours take place at 10am approximately every two weeks on the following Tuesdays: 17 January, 7 February, 21 February, 7 March, 21 March, 4 April & 18 April.

All tours include a visit to the rooftop projection suite, which incorporates the Regent cinema museum, a comprehensive collection of vintage cinema artefacts and ephemera.

Tickets are £5 and have to be booked at [www.theregent.co.uk](http://www.theregent.co.uk) or by calling the box office on 01202 499199. To arrange a private tour for a group of 20 or more please contact [admin@theregent.co.uk](mailto:admin@theregent.co.uk).

### ISLINGTON'S BIG SCREENS GUIDED WALKING TOURS

CTA member and London tour guide Nigel Smith leads regular walking tours exploring the history of cinemas and cinema-going in Islington, starting at Angel tube station.

Walks are currently scheduled for: Sunday 29 January (11am), Wednesday 8 February (10:30am), Saturday 18 February (10:30am) and Saturday 11 March (2pm).

For more details and to book tickets visit [www.nigel-smith-walks.com](http://www.nigel-smith-walks.com).

Tickets are £15 but CTA members get 10% off using the code CTA23 at checkout. You can also contact Nigel at [hello@nigel-smith-walks.com](mailto:hello@nigel-smith-walks.com).



## 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](mailto:RichardNormanCTA@aol.com)



# HERITAGE CASEWORK

By Mike Whitcombe

*The CTA Casework Committee is continually involved in securing a positive future for many endangered cinemas, both present and former. Here is a summary of their current work load.*

## Grade II\* Listed

### STATE GRAYS



The hole in the roof at the State Grays

The deterioration of the State cinema's roof has become critical since Wetherspoon put the building up for sale after announcing they will not be turning this longest-running disused cinema into a pub. We have asked Thurrock Council to issue an Urgent Works Notice to prevent further water penetration. We have also offered to meet the Council to discuss the future use of the building and issued a press release stating this. To support local pressure, we have been touch with the 'Save the State' group.

## Grade II Listed

### EMPIRE SUTTON COLDFIELD, BIRMINGHAM

Birmingham City council has granted permission for Empire to sell the car park for redevelopment but with a Section 106 agreement that the developers, McCarthy & Stone, pay a £200,000 contribution towards the refurbishment of the cinema.

### RITZ ILKESTON

Drawings have been submitted for a speculative pub conversion. The Conservation Officer has taken a robust line with the owner to maintain the building.

### FORUM LIVERPOOL

Liverpool Council is looking to dispose of the building. We are engaged with the Theatres Trust in looking at future use in performance.

### REGAL KINGSTON, LONDON

We attended a presentation by the architects, who are proposing to use the auditorium as serviced office space with four floors of residential on the roof. We recently had a site visit with the new Conservation Officer of Kingston Council.

### CURZON MAYFAIR, LONDON

Westminster Council has ignored objections from the landlords and, with our support, designated the building as an Asset of Community Value.

### REGAL ROTHERHAM

The building is up for sale. The Council, however, is keen to have a theatre in town. The Theatres Trust is in touch with the Council about this.

### IMPERIAL WALSALL

The Council has refused a damaging planning application to develop the building into residential units, which would have resulted in the 1914 interior being carved up into small, sub-standard flats with numerous small windows punched into the outside walls. We have opposed the application and are now in close touch with the Council on a positive use for the Imperial, which respects its heritage and makes it an asset for the town.

### RITZ NUNEATON

The cinema remains in a fragile condition. The Nepalese owners have raised funds to carry out necessary repairs and we are proposing a meeting with a representative from the National Lottery to see if more funds can be obtained.

### EMPIRE HAYMARKET, LONDON

We continue to urge the Crown Estate to implement the scheme for which they were granted consent in 2020. They are keen to meet us and this will take place in the New Year.

## Not Listed

### PLAZA GLOUCESTER

Gloucester City Council's Conservation Officer has said the Council wishes to retain the façade and will keep us updated on developments.

### ODEON HALIFAX

A Mecca Bingo closure, the former Odeon is on an island site and has a good interior. We will contact the local Conservation Officer to discover what fate awaits it.

### BRONTË HAWORTH

We have written to Historic England to support the listing application.

### GAUMONT DINGLE, LIVERPOOL

We are contacting the local Conservation Officer over this cinema, which has been derelict for many years.

### ODEON/HOLLYWOOD NORWICH

We supported a listing application but regrettably Historic England turned it down.

### NEW VICTORIA PRESTON

We have supported a local campaigner in successfully saving the cinema's façade.

### ADELPHI SLOUGH

The Council, which is bankrupt and selling off assets, is, though, reluctant to part with the Adelphi, which it owns. We have suggested it sells the car park and keeps the cinema. It is currently open and run by Buzz Bingo.

### GAUMONT BIRKENHEAD



A proposal for flats has been withdrawn and the building is currently being used as a furniture shop. We will monitor the situation as the cinema is in an important location, opposite the Grade I listed Birkenhead Park. *photo taken July 2007*

## Wales

## Grade II

### ODEON/CALON LLANELLI

Progress on work to reopen the cinema has been delayed by the pandemic but the Welsh Assembly Government has been very supportive. The owner, William Ratti, has invested great deal of his own money in the project and CTA Cymru are supporting and encouraging his efforts in bringing the building back to use.

### PALACE CONWY

We are to arrange a local meeting to discuss the future of the cinema, which is looking very run-down.

*Past and present cinemas around the country are always under threat. The CTA Casework team is always happy to help another cinema from disappearing forever and your help could be vital in doing just that. If any member learns of a threat to a cinema, please let the Casework Committee know. You might just save a cinema for future generations.*



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compiled by Harry Rigby

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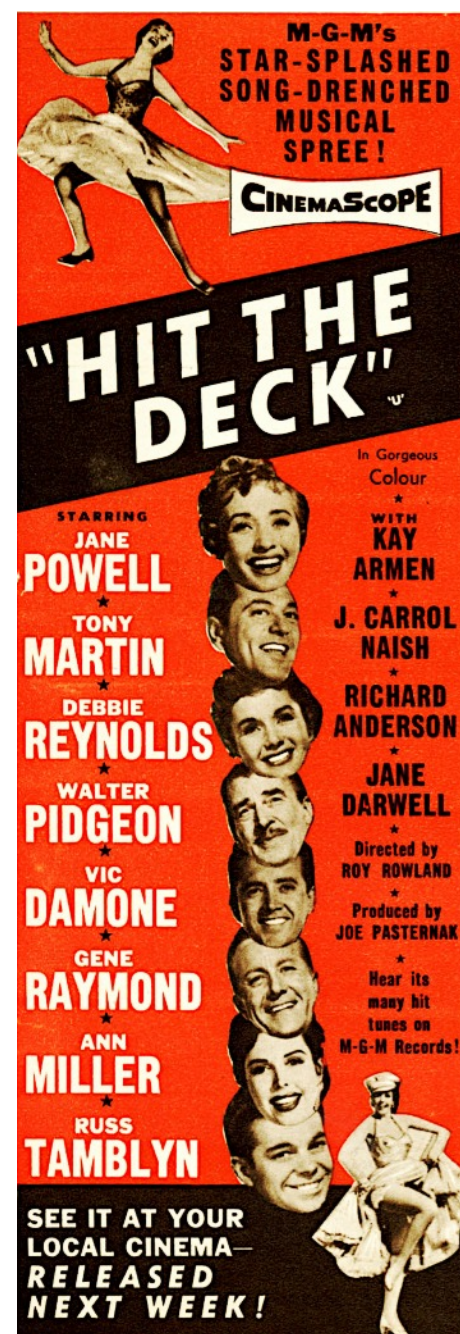
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# PUBLICATIONS

## 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
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- No 31 – £7.50
- Nos 32, 33, 34, 35 – £5.00 each
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- Nos 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46 – £6.00 each

For details of contents, see Bulletin 56/6, or online at [www.cta-uk.org/publishing/picture-house](http://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 2021 are £4.00 per year (6 issues), individual copies are £1.00 each. Prices for issues in 2022 and 2023 are £6.00 per copy. All prices include postage. There are some issues available from earlier years – 1967 to 1986. Please send enquiries to the Sales Officer.

### BINDERS FOR PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

These binders are to a new, revised design, which should allow easier storage for the more recent thicker copies of the magazine. The 'Wirex' system allows copies to be inserted easily and removed if required. There are twelve wires per binder, although the number of copies that can be inserted may vary depending on the thickness of the issue. The binders can also be used for the thinner, earlier copies of the magazine. Featuring a red leather-look finish and the magazine title on the spine in the current format.



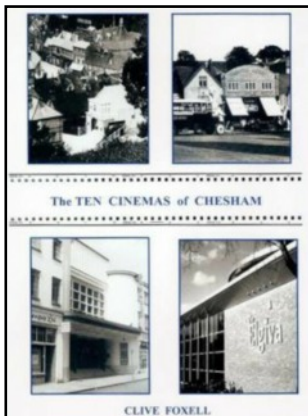
**Price:** £6.00 per binder, supplied in a special postal carton. Please add £3.40 to your total order for post and packing. Ordering details opposite.

## New Publication

### The Ten Cinemas of Chesham by Clive Foxell

40 pages, A5 paperback, illustrated. £7.95 plus £3.40 postage

This book gives brief histories of the ten cinemas that have existed in the Buckinghamshire town of Chesham. They range from the travelling fair-ground shows in 1905 up to the present-day New Elgiva Centre, a multi-purpose arts centre dating from 2015. Undoubtedly the finest building was the Embassy, opened in 1935, designed by David Nye with interior decoration by Mollo & Egan. It sadly closed in 1982 and was demolished for old peoples' flats. How tragic that this was not converted to an arts centre – instead the Elgiva Centre was built on another site, although this too fell to the wrecker's ball in 1998 and was replaced by the present-day Centre. There is a map and gazetteer and appendices dealing with cinema pioneers and 'how to change over projectors'. The book was originally published in 2010, and revised in 2016 but the author sadly died before that revision was published. Now a local bookshop owner has arranged the publishing of this new edition.



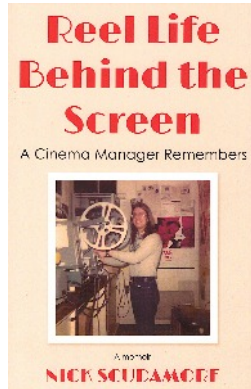
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## Also Available (but not from the Sales Officer)

**Reel Life Behind the Screen – A Cinema Manager Remembers** by Nick Scudamore, 214 pages, A5 softback, illustrated. ISBN 9781803133324. From bookshops, or from [www.troubador.co.uk](http://www.troubador.co.uk) £12.99, or as an e-book for £5.99.

In this amusing book, the author recalls his career as a manager from 1979 to 1987 in a series of cinemas, mainly 'art-houses' in the London area. These include the Paris-Pullman, the Screen on the Green, Classics at Tooting and Hampstead, Cannons at Charing Cross Road and Shaftesbury Avenue, with a short spell at the Phoenix Oxford. He also worked at one or two venues of a seedier nature in Soho and ended his spell at the Cannon Chelsea. Along the way he had to deal with bosses who got drunk, dead bodies, robberies, near riots by the audience, bizarre public behaviour and the occasional celebrity. As Nick explains, "The operational and economic context of films and the film business as a whole has changed so much in the 40 years since the events I remember that it seems now worthwhile to record just a little of this pre-Internet history before it fades from living memory." Several of the illustrations are sourced from the CTA archive.



### Cinemas & Cinema-Going in the United Kingdom:

**Decades of Decline 1945-65**, by Sam Manning.

250 pages, illustrated. ISBN 9781912702350.

Available through Amazon etc or from:

[www.sas.ac.uk/publications/cinemas-and-cinema-going-united-kingdom](http://www.sas.ac.uk/publications/cinemas-and-cinema-going-united-kingdom) £25 softback, £40 hardback (but enter promotion code MOVIE30 at checkout for 30% discount). Also available as a [free pdf download](#) from same website, select 'free pdf'.

Although published in 2020, this book has not featured here before. The author examines why cinema-going changed from being the most popular commercial leisure activity in the first half of the twentieth century, peaking in 1946 with 1.6 billion recorded admissions, to being much less important 20 years later. Though 'going to the pictures' remained a popular pastime, the transition to peacetime altered citizens' leisure habits. During the 1950s increased affluence, the growth of television ownership and the diversification of leisure led to rapid declines in attendance. Cinema attendances fell in all regions but the speed, nature and extent of decline varied widely across the United Kingdom. By linking national developments to detailed case studies of Belfast and Sheffield, this book adds to our understanding of regional variations in film exhibition, audience habits and cinema-going experiences during a period of profound social and cultural change. Drawing on a wide range of quantitative and qualitative sources, the study conveys the diverse nature of this important industry and the significance of place as a determinant of film attendance in post-war Britain. The publishers specialise in making student theses widely available to a more general audience, hence the publication is available to download for free.





# CTA WESSEX and REGENT CHRISTMAS CRACKER

By David Eve, events organiser for CTA Wessex

The proposed train strikes and weather made it difficult to advertise our Christmas party to a wider audience, however twenty members ventured out to the Regent Studio on Sunday 11 December.

The management of the Regent Christchurch loaned us the room and our projectionists' fund paid for a large free buffet and drinks for those who could make it. We had a good old-fashioned slide show presented by long-standing CTA member Chris Simmonds, with lots of well photographed images of some sadly missed UK cinemas.

After our buffet we ran some rare 16mm film of Bournemouth cinemas, shot in the early 1980s by our much-missed CTA member John Thornley. Featured was some great footage of the Continental Cinema at Winton Banks in Bournemouth, sadly demolished but with a distinguished history. Apologies if our disco lighting provided by Scott Gurd, the Regent's Stage Manager, gives the images some strange hues. Feedback from those who attended was good and we hope to do similar, more locally based events for members in the future

*All photos by the author*



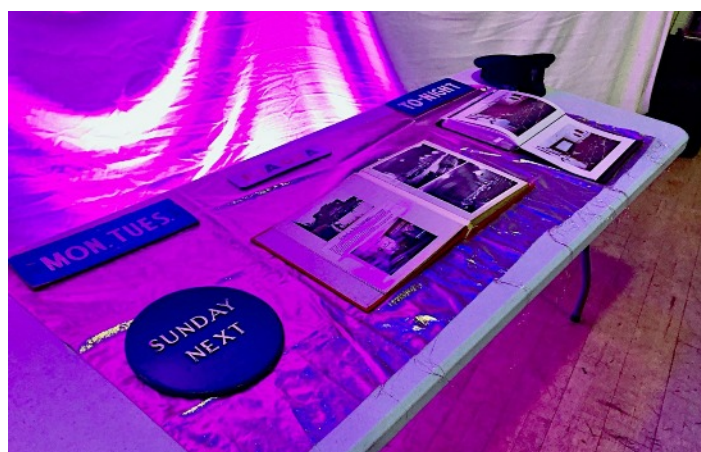
Former Odeon Leicester Square Chief  
Nigel Wolland MBE enjoys a break



Regent Chairman Gary Trinder with Chris Simmonds  
making sure our projector was up to speed



Members Justin Guy [L] and Chris Simmonds [R]  
discuss the decreasing size of Walnut Whips



Artefacts display



Christian Knighton [C] and Joy Surtees [R] top up their glasses  
with Ruby Payne [L] from *Dirt in the Gate*



Some rare film footage of the fondly remembered  
Continental, Winton Banks, Bournemouth



# CTA VISIT TO SOUTH KENSINGTON

## (Exposition de films à South Kensington)

By Mike Wood

The most recent cinema visit by the CTA in early November would at first glance appear to be a curious left-field pairing of the Ciné Lumière at the Institut Français and the IMAX in the Ronson Theatre at the Science Museum, the only obvious connection being that they are situated either side of the Cromwell Road in South Kensington – or was it that these two venues were an echo of the beginnings of film exhibition versus the very latest? However, to this regular on CTA Events visits it just made perfect sense, transporting me back to the late fifties and early sixties and my schoolboy trips to the Science Museum, plus the emergence of the French New Wave in film and my first trip to Paris.



Screen ② at the Ciné Lumière [1]

It was Marion & John Kennett who organised the visit along with Richard Norman and a good turnout of almost fifty members assembled early on a rainy morning, gathering in the Ciné Lumière II basement screen to be greeted by the manager Solene Levrat for a welcome and introduction. This small screen was opened in 2019 to the design of Stefanie Fischer, who is well known to us as an architect specialising in community cinemas. The Grade II Listed main building was designed by French architect Patrice Bonnet, opening



The exterior of the Ciné Lumière at the Institut Français [3]

in 1939, although the striking exterior was temporarily hidden by scaffold for restoration on the day of our visit.

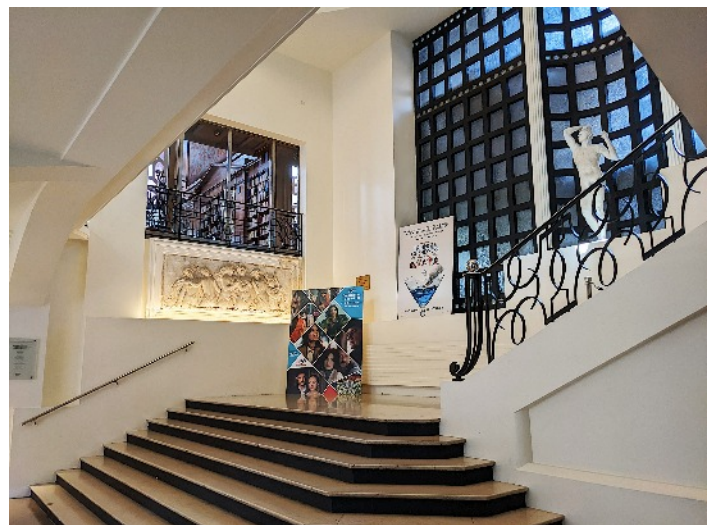


Screen ① at the Ciné Lumière [1]



The auditorium and projection box at Screen ① at the Ciné Lumière [1]

The main screen is reached upstairs, passing the library and Médiathèque facilities of the institute, with some subtle hints of early French Arts Décoratifs in the balustrade and windows. The auditorium was originally built as a theatre and adapted for film in 1996. Stefanie Fischer with Burrell Foley Fischer led a renovation in 2008/9 to improve the comfort and accentuate the simple decorative features of the original interior design. Always a favourite to view on a CTA trip, the projection box situated on the shallow balcony and equipped for digital projection as well as 16mm and 35mm was open for viewing.



The staircase at the Ciné Lumière [1]

Our detailed visit notes with a map of the area had recommendations for lunch, including the café at the Institute and the nearby museums provided plenty of options for our break.



## CINEMA BUSINESS

### NOT FASHIONABLE?



Fashion retailer M&Co has collapsed into administration as rising costs have pushed it over the brink. The administrators are exploring a sale of the business. Two of their stores are in former cinemas – the Embassy Tenterden (Kent) {27174} and the Palace in Blandford Forum (Dorset) {27384} pictured above in March 2009.

*Retail Gazette – date unknown; sent in by Gary Donaldson*

### CINEWORLD IN THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

Cineworld is appealing against an order to pay £1 million in unpaid rent and insurance costs incurred while its venue in Jersey was shut during the pandemic – arguing that the government, which ordered the closure, is also the landlord. The ten-screen venue closed on 17 March 2020 and did not fully reopen until 21 May 2021. The company was told to pay the outstanding costs at a hearing in October. {23959}

*Jersey Evening Post – 22 November*

### EVERYMAN

Chairman Paul Wise is standing down “to pursue other interests”. He will be replaced by Philip Jacobson, who is a non-executive director of the firm. The chain currently has 38 venues.

*Daily Express – 19 November; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### CROWDS BACK BUT NOT CASH

Odeon lost £37.2m in 2021, down from £76.2m the year before. Its cinemas were kept closed by the pandemic until mid-May but then attendances reached 9.5m, up from 5.2m on 2020. Total UK cinema audiences rose to 74m, well down on the 176m in 2019. Odeon's turnover jumped from £65.9m in 2020 to £136.8m last year.

*Daily Express – 10 December; sent in by Tom Laughlan & Barry Quinton*

### RANK ROCKED

Rank group is facing a £34m energy bill, up from £23m, amid what bosses describe as a “challenging” backdrop. Shares in the company, which runs Mecca Bingo, fell 10.8%. Rank recorded a 2% increase in group like-for-like revenues to £165.7m over the three months to 30 September.

*Daily Mail – 14 October; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### DISNEY

Shares in Disney shot up 10% after retired executive Bob Iger made a surprise return as CEO. Before retirement he spent more than four decades at Disney, including 15 years as CEO. He has agreed to serve for two more years. Disney's market value fell 40% in 2022.

*Evening Standard – 21 November; sent in by Tom Laughlan*

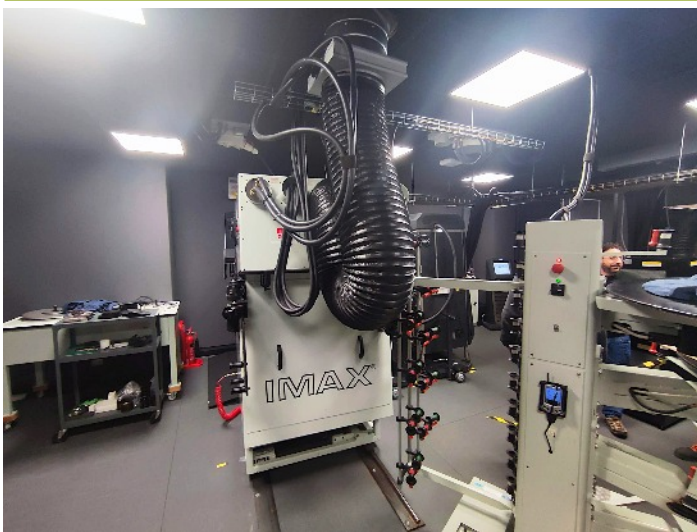
### CURTAIN DOWN

Some of Britain's cultural organisations are being forced to move away from London after a shake-up of arts funding. The English National Opera has lost its £12.6m annual grant – a third of its annual income – but will receive £17m over there years to help it relocate. Manchester is the most likely destination but that would put it in direct competition with Opera North, which is based in Leeds. The Royal Opera House will lose £2.9m a year and the National Theatre grant will be reduced by £850,000. The Arts Council's new investment portfolio includes 276 organisations that previously weren't part of the programme. It means 990 institutions from all over England will share £446m each year.

*Daily Express – 3 November; sent in by Tom Laughlan*



The auditorium at the Science Museum IMAX {2}



The IMAX projection room at the Science Museum {4}

Dodging the rain showers, we re-grouped at the Science Museum where we were met by the Head of Commercial Experiences Mark Cuttmore who led us up to the Ronson Theatre (named after the benefactor) and gave us a lively introduction to the original installation of the giant screen and the latest IMAX technical standard for the projection in London and also the facilities at their Bradford Pictureville, which many of us will have witnessed during Widescreen Weekends where, as well as an IMAX screen, they retain the last working 3-strip Cinerama installation (the Los Angeles Cinerama Dome remains closed).

Mark also listed some of the film directors and many other private hires that have used the London facility in between the scheduled public programme. Then it was no surprise that a queue quickly formed for us to view the projection suite high above the stadium seating before settling down for the public viewing of one of the current programme presentations. This and the glimpses of the current Science Museum gallery displays, certainly had a wow factor not experienced in those far off school trips.

And what was I doing in Paris at age sixteen? Why, in a cinema watching a Jean-Luc Godard film in French, through a fog of Gauloises and garlic and not understanding a word. Subsequent French film seasons at the NFT on the South Bank and occasionally at the Cameo Poly, now the Regent Street Cinema with its Lumière brothers' connections, were then a must-see for me, so this CTA trip brought back some great memories. My thanks to Marion, John, Richard and our friendly hosts, front of house and in the projection box, for a memorable day out.

### ONLINE LINKS FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Ciné Lumière listing on Cinema Treasures:  
[cinematreasures.org/theaters/25879](https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/25879)  
 Movie Theaters Designed by Stefanie Fischer:  
[cinematreasures.org/architects/1069](https://cinematreasures.org/architects/1069)  
 IMAX at the Science Museum Ronson Theatre:  
[www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/imax-cinema](https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/imax-cinema)

Photos by {1} Kevin Gooding; {2} The author; {3} Bruce C.



# THE CAPITOL QUEEN STREET, CARDIFF

By Tim McCullen



The Capitol was the only cinema designed by RS Philips. It was originally to be called the Coliseum, conceptualised as being considerably larger than was finally realised. Despite being downsized in the light of various planning difficulties experienced, its balcony was the largest of its time. The cinema was erected by Messrs Tilney Kinema Ltd in 1920 and opened its doors on 26 December 1921. It would have capacity for 3,000 seats, three restaurants measuring 74 x 50 feet, one on each of three floors and a ballroom of 82 x 50 feet in the basement. There was a lift to all floors and a straight organ.



By 1931 the Capitol was leased to Paramount Film Services with 2,800 seats plus stage productions, with a fully equipped stage with a depth of 22 feet and a 45-foot proscenium arch.

Acquired by Odeon during World War II, the restaurant remained open until June 1967, while the ballroom was leased to a dancing school. Were all the other restaurants areas left disused?

In the sixties, the cinema seated 1,445 in the stalls and 1,008 in the circle. It frequently highlighted a number of stage shows including that of the Beatles. According to the CTA Bulletin 2/5, September 1968, there were plans to triple it to the tune of £500,000, seating 600, 1,200 and 1,000. Rank obtained planning permission to convert the building into a bingo hall, with two or three cinemas, in the 1970s.

## Capitol CARDIFF

Tel: 31316

**SUN., 31st MARCH, at 7.30 p.m.**

R.A.M. Promotions in association with G.T.O. Ltd.  
present:

## THE NEW SEEKERS

### IN CONCERT

Advance Booking Office opens Sun., 3rd March, 10.30 a.m.  
Tickets: £1.75, £1.45, £1.10, 75p.  
Personal applications only. Maximum of 6 tickets per person.

**NO Postal Bookings — NO Telephone Bookings.**

The CTA visited the Capitol on 12 September 1976 along with the Odeon Queen Street, Prince of Wales and the Gala.

Whether these plans could have come to fruition and lasted over-time will never be known, given the decline in popularity of bingo. At the time, Odeon also operated an original Odeon and in 1977 had acquired the Plaza at Gabalfa, which seated 1,228, from the Jackson Withers circuit; the Plaza closed on 17 October 1981. About two years after closure, the fixtures and fittings were auctioned off and the building was finally put to rest through its demolition for housing in February 1983.



The Capitol in 1971

The site was subsequently developed into the Capitol Exchange Shopping centre, which included a new cinema complex. Initially, it was thought that Maybox would open here but in the end it was Odeon that took the site. Housing a five-screen Capitol Odeon, seating: 1) 425, 2) 261, 3) 223, 4) 186 and 5) 161, it opened on 22 August 1991.

### CAPITOL CARDIFF

TEL: 31316

George C. Scott  
"THE DAY OF THE DOLPHIN"  
Daily at 1.25, 5.0, 8.40 (U)

Plus  
"TRINITY IS STILL MY NAME"  
Daily at 3.10 and 6.50 (A)

### ODEON CARDIFF

TEL: 27058

Retained for Second Week  
Julie Christie, Donald Sutherland  
"DON'T LOOK NOW"  
Evenings at 5.0 and 8.40 (X)  
Plus  
"THE WICKER MAN"  
Evenings at 6.55 only (X)

Special children's matinee daily  
Two Dr. Who & Daleks films.

Boys' & Girls' Club at the ODEON every Saturday at 10 a.m.

The original Odeon in Queen Street by that time had been twinned and continued with seats of 1) 448 and 2) 643, closing on 17 January 2000, to be sadly demolished.

The almost adjacent ABC with three screens of 1) 617, 2) 311 and 3) 153 seats, closed on 10 June 1999 and also suffered demolition.

On 12 August 2001, with the rise of the other multiplexes, including a UCI (which has become an Odeon), the Capitol Odeon was finally closed on 12 August 2001. It remained mothballed until it surprisingly reopened as the Premiere on 17 April 2015, despite the competition posed by the Multiplex. It closed on 17 October 2022

#### CARDIFF NOW HAS THE FOLLOWING CINEMAS:

Odeon (ex UCI) – was 12 Screens, now 18; opened October 1997  
 Vue (ex Ster Century) – was 14 Screens, now 7; opened July 2001  
 Cineworld (ex Virgin/UCG) – 15 Screens; opened 11 April 2003  
 Showcase (Nantgarw) – 12 Screens; opened 19 Nov 1999  
 Everyman – 5 Screens; opened 23 Dec 2019  
 Chapter Arts Centre – 2 Screens; opened 1971.

Photos from CTA Archive



# PROJECTION BOX MEMORIES

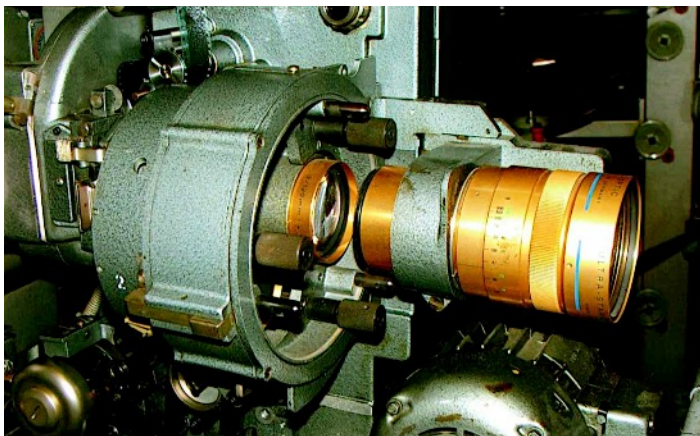
By Mike Whitcombe

I was settling into a seat at my local Odeon recently when the teaser trailer for Sam Mendes' *Empire of Light* hit the screen. Filmed at the iconic art deco Dreamland cinema in Margate, which was transformed into the fictional Empire Cinema for the film, the trailer shows Toby Jones, as Norman the projectionist, opening the dower on his projector and winding film at his rewind bench. Beautifully shot by cinematographer Roger Deakins, these images instantly transported me back to those halcyon days when I was a projectionist.

Being a projectionist really was a calling. After all, we didn't do it for the money – it wasn't very well paid. Nor did we do it for a happy family life – working nights, weekends and every public holiday doesn't endear you to your nearest and dearest. And we certainly didn't do it for the adulation – we were the person hidden away in a darkened room, who never even got a thanks for flawlessly projecting a moving image onto that giant silver screen. But none of that mattered as soon as you stepped into your projection box, where the magic really happened.



I projected my last film in January 2008 when our cinema closed and we were made redundant. Fifteen years on, I still recall fondly the reassuring whirr of the projector, the heat in the projection box after an hour of running – stifling in summer, cosy in winter – and the satisfaction of splicing together a package of trailers or making up a film. And let's not forget the thrill you could get from decent presentation. In other words, closing the tabs and raising the lights at the end of the trailers, playing a timed piece of appropriate music and then dimming the lights and making sure the tabs swished open as the certificate appeared – before upping the volume and blasting out the Twentieth Century Fox fanfare or MGM's Leo the Lion's roar. There really was an art to putting on a show!



The perceptive film critic Mark Kermode once observed how crazy it was that movie studios spent millions on making the latest blockbuster only to leave it to the lowly paid and overworked projectionist to be the final link in the chain. He was right, of course. And for anyone who went to the cinema when celluloid was king and watched a movie that was badly scratched and had inferior sound, you'll know exactly what Kermode was getting at. It wasn't, though, always the fault of the poor old projectionist. We often had to work with outdated equipment,

which the chain that ran the cinema were too cheap to replace. But we did our best and if you were fortunate enough to have the best engineer in all of cinema world, you rarely had any problems. My engineer was Bob Dobson, who was, without doubt, the best engineer in all of cinema world! If he couldn't find a solution to a problem, there wasn't one. From a technical viewpoint, Bob's visits were the reason our site ran so smoothly. Odeon was fortunate to have him as their senior engineer.

There were many perks to being a projectionist. The most obvious one was being able to watch whatever film you wanted in peace and quiet. You just went into work early in the morning, laced up the machine, turned it on, got comfortable in the auditorium and watched a film with no distractions. Then there was the fact that you were responsible for maintaining the building. I was fortunate to work in three 'proper' cinemas, designed by WR Glen, RA Thomas and Andrew Mather respectively. Each was an art deco gem, which I enjoyed maintaining. The only thing more beautiful than a cinema built in the 1930s is that cinema before you open to the public. Early mornings working in these deserted buildings – painting a foyer, changing light bulbs, repairing seats or getting on with some chores in your projection box, strangely quiet without the projectors clattering away – were some of my happiest times.

By the time I started in the projection box, changeovers and carbons were no more. I began projecting films from towers (which meant you rewound the programme after each show) before going onto 'cake stands' (or non-rewind platters as one chap insisted on calling them). Xenons were our light source so, in the eyes of some, I had it easy. To be fair, they would be right. But single manning and multiple screens meant you needed some help. But I never used automation – I started and ended each film manually. I enjoyed my craft too much just to press a button.



But now it's just a click of a keyboard. Digital rules! Projectionists are just a memory. The magic has been lost. Sound and picture quality nowadays might be better than before because of digital but there's no showmanship and when something goes wrong in the box, there's no projectionist to save the day. Mark Kermode, who I suspect has a soft spot for projectionists, summed it up perfectly when he wrote: "A cinema without a projectionist is not a cinema; it is a sweet shop with a video screen."

I miss my time in the box and some of the characters who inhabited it. We really were masters of our own little kingdom, mainly because nobody else knew or cared what we did. To be honest, it wasn't difficult but you did need to be passionate and organised. Those who weren't continually made basic mistakes.

It was a privilege to project the latest release and those of us who loved our craft would take as much care when the auditorium was full on a Saturday night as we did on a wet midweek afternoon when just a couple of souls dotted a six-hundred-seat screen. I still go to the cinema every week and, whenever I do, just before the movie begins, I cast a wistful look over my shoulder at that beam of light high above, cutting through the dust, which produces images that can capture your heart, make you grab the edge of your seat or laugh until your sides ache.

*The photos illustrating this piece show screen one projection box (the original box) at the four-screen Odeon Portsmouth and date from 2007, a year before the cinema closed for good. They show a Vic 8 projector along with 'cake stand' (as well as a youthful looking me!) and were taken by an old friend and former projectionist, Eric Broadbridge, who is sadly no longer with us.*



# CINEMAS OF ALTRINCHAM, GREATER MANCHESTER

By Richard Hagon

## THE HIPPODROME



The Hippodrome Cinema was opened in 1912 and was designed by architects Butterworth & Duncan and erected by the well-known Lancashire theatre proprietor Thomas Hargreaves. It had a seating capacity of 1,800. The proscenium was 27 feet wide. The local press reported that there was an uninterrupted view of the stage from every seat, there being no heavy pillars and the pit and gallery floors sloped sufficiently to give a clear view of the stage over the heads of those in front. It was equipped with the Bioscope and films became a regular feature of the variety shows in the early days. It was damaged by a fire in January 1917 but was restored and reopened in March 1917. In 1919 it was renamed Royal Hippodrome but only for a short period of time.

<b>New Hippodrome, Altrincham.</b> <small>Proprietors - Thos. Hargreaves Ltd.  Resident Manager - Mr. A. Jago.</small>	
<small>Managing Director - Thos. Hargreaves.  Assistant Manager - Mr. Percy.</small>	
<b>GRAND OPENING WEEK.</b>	
<b>PROGRAMME. Monday, February 5th, 1912, and during the week.</b>	
<b>1-Overture.</b> Musical Director	<b>5-Hippodrome Pictures</b>
<b>2-ALBERT ASHTON</b> Boy Character Vocalist.	<b>6-MONA VANDA</b> Character Vocalist and Dancer.
<b>3-JACK RAE</b> Original Comedy Jazzing Pianist.	<b>7-JOSEPHINE LANGLEY</b> Lancashire's Lady Vestriologist.
<b>4-MARIE SANTOI</b> And Her Ferry Company of Japs. In an up-to-date Neutral Comedy - "A Night in Japan."	<b>8-Miss DORA HILSTROM</b> AND PLAYERS in a Grand Society Process. "Men Where Devils Live." (Six arrangements with Miss H. Smythson, Eng.) Miss Dora Hilstrom as Mlle. Julie Lazaire

It was equipped with an RCA sound system and the first talkie *The Man Who Came Back* was screened on 9 October 1931. After this time it became a full-time cinema. It was closed in 1963 and was taken over by the Leeds-based Star Cinemas chain, who reopened the cinema using the circle area only, changing the name to Studio One. Bingo was operated in the former stalls area. Star Cinemas was taken over by the Cannon Group and it was renamed Cannon. The Cannon was closed on 9 October 1986 and the building was demolished in January 1987. An office block now occupies the site. {40607}



<b>PROGRAMME</b> <b>NEW HIPPODROME</b> <b>ALTRINCHAM.</b>	
<b>TWICE NIGHTLY.</b> No Early Doors. No extra charge for Admission.	
Private Boxes - 10/- Stalls - 1/- Circle - 5/- Pit - 5/- Gallery - 3/-	Proprietors Thos. Hargreaves Ltd. Managing Director Mr. Thos. Hargreaves. Resident Manager Mr. A. Jago. Assistant Manager Mr. Percy.

## ALTRINCHAM PICTURE THEATRE



In October 1913 the Altrincham Guardian announced the near completion of a 'New Electric Picture Theatre', Altrincham's first purpose-built cinema. Located in Altrincham, Cheshire, on Stamford New Road near Altrincham Railway Station, it was erected for the Altrincham Picture Theatre Co by Houldsworth & Sons of Patricroft, Eccles under the supervision of the architect Mr TA Fitton of Manchester. The Picture Theatre was opened in February 1914. It had a 35 ft wide proscenium. In 1929 it was equipped with a Western Electric (WE) sound system. In the mid-1930s it was taken over by the HD Moorhouse chain. By 1963 it had been equipped with a British Acoustic (BA) sound system. The Picture Theatre was closed in 1966. An office block now occupies the site. {48292}

## THE REGAL SUPER CINEMA



The Regal Super Cinema was opened on 13 May 1931 with 1,786 seats. It was operated by the Snape & Ward circuit. It was equipped with a Compton 3 Manual / 11 Rank organ with an illuminated console, which was opened by organist Joseph Seal. The first resident organist was Norman Crocker, who was also the assistant organist at Manchester Cathedral. The cinema also had a café. The architects were Drury & Gommersall of Manchester. The promoters described their cinema as 'A Cathedral of Cinemas' with a commanding and delightful terracotta frontage, which was majestic and imposing. It was taken over by Union Cinemas Ltd in February 1937 and they were taken over by Associated British Cinemas (ABC) in October 1937. The Regal Super Cinema was destroyed by a fire after the performance on the evening of 6 January 1956. Because of the foggy conditions, unfortunately the alarm was not raised until the early hours of 7 January, when flames broke through the fog. Apparently, with the projection box still warm, the projectionist was allowed back into the building under the supervision of the fire officers to recover the previous night's films. He set up his rewinder against a fence outside and the films were spooled off and returned to their cans. Badly damaged, the remains of the Regal were demolished soon after. An office block was constructed on the site called Roberts House, which has recently been converted into apartments. {24745}



## EVERYMAN CINEMA



Plans for this Everyman cinema, on George Street in the centre of Altrincham, Trafford, Greater Manchester were approved by Trafford Council in May 2018. The site was previously occupied by a JJB Sports store. The application was originally prepared by Merepark Project Management on behalf of Altrincham Regeneration LLP. In a nice touch, during the gutting of the original building and the construction of the cinema, Everyman erected large Laurel and Hardy-themed photo boards around the site, with appropriate opening announcements.



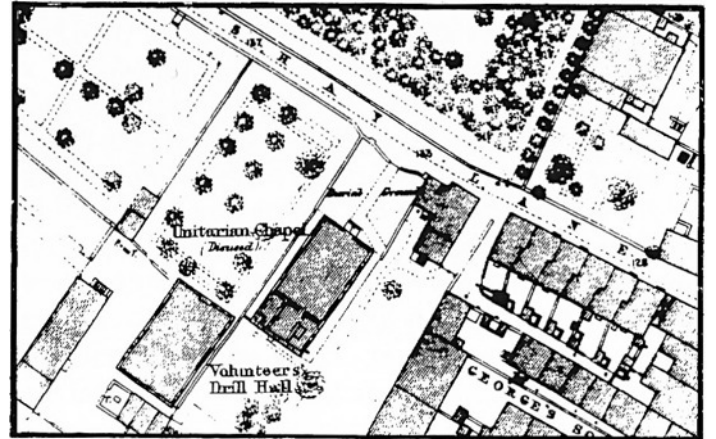
The Everyman opened on Friday 9 November 2018. It is accessible from both George Street and New Market Street. The four screens and bar/restaurant are located on the first floor, with two retail/leisure units at ground level. The opening films, spread over the four screens, were *The Grinch*, *The Nutcracker and the Four Realms*, *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Widows*, *Peterloo*, *A Star is Born* and *First Man*. Seating capacities are: Screen ① 80, Screen ② 42, Screen ③ 71 and Screen ④ 54. All have Sony 4K projection and Dolby 7.1 digital sound, while Screen ③ is equipped for Real 3D. {58804}

## THE APOLLO CINEMA



The Apollo Cinema on Lloyd Street, Altrincham opened on 8 December 2006, bringing cinema back to the town after an absence of 20 years. In late-2014 it was taken over by Vue Cinemas. It is still operating, although the large retail unit on the corner of the building is vacant. {24107}

## THE CENTRAL THEATRE



Map of 1876. Shay Lane became Shaw's Road. The property that became the Central was in front of and joined to, the disused Unitarian Chapel, built in 1816.

The Central, after which Central Way in Altrincham takes its name, was in business by 1907. At the beginning of the Century the building was in use as a Salvation Army Barracks; by 1905 it became the Clarion Club; by 1906 it was the Shakespeare Theatre and after refurbishment the following year it opened as the Central. Plays and Variety were presented and films entered the programmes about a year later. In 1910 there was a further refurbishment and grand reopening under the banner of the New Central Hall. Films gradually took precedence and the Central became a full-time cinema during the first world war. It survived until 1933, then closed after failing to comply with safety regulations. Later the building was occupied by the Post Office. It was finally demolished during redevelopment in the mid 1970s. Unfortunately, no photographs of the building appear to exist. {48293}

*Acknowledgement: The content and pictures in this article are mainly from a book by local photographer the late Douglas Rendell called Cinemas of Trafford and the Cinema Treasures website.*

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# THE ODEON CLACTON-ON-SEA

By Derek Threadgall

I was born in 1938 and spent World War II in a two up, two down terraced house in Dovercourt, then a sleepy Essex seaside resort. The town boasted two cinemas, **The Regal** and **The Regent** with support a mile away in Harwich, the local fleapit, **The Electric Palace**, (no longer a fleapit). All three cinemas played a major part in developing my career in the British film industry. The 940-seat **Regal**, opened in 1938, closed in 1969 and was demolished in 1989. The 750-seat **Regent** opened in the early 1920s and closed in the early 1960s, when it converted to a sail making factory. However, the 308-seat **Harwich Electric Palace**, opened in 1911 and closed in 1956, has shed its fleapit reputation and blossomed into a historic cinema. I am proud to write that I was a member of the fundraising team that took the **Electric Palace** by the scruff of its neck and propelled it into the amazing cinema it is today. The fascinating story of the **Electric Palace** is a beacon of faith standing out among the dross of cinema closures and conversions today. The ghastly Multiplexes are a stain on cinema history and evolution when even the word 'cinema' has been replaced by 'screens'.



The Electric Palace Harwich in 1980, before restoration

To discover, enjoy and marvel at the remarkable world of the **Electric Palace**, I recommend acquiring a copy of *The Harwich Electric Palace* by Chris Strachan and *Saving The Electric Palace Harwich*, a special presentation in *Picture House No 37* (2012), The Cinema Theatre Association (CTA) magazine. Both publications can be obtained from the CTA.

Not to be left out, both the **Regal** and **Regent** cinemas unknowingly helped my career ambition. When I first started school in Dovercourt, my infant school was opposite the **Regent** Cinema. For some reason best known to himself, the headmaster decided to arrange a private showing in the **Regent** across the road of *Henry V* (1944). Eventually, the entire class of four-year-olds, including me, crossed the road and trooped into a cinema for the first time. I remembered nothing of the



The Regent Dovercourt as a sail factory in July 2007

film apart from 'The Battle of Agincourt' – and the music. But something else stirred in my four-year-old brain. It was the cinema itself. It seemed to wrap itself around me, creating a new world of entertainment that I wanted to be part of. The music from the film also affected me, leading me to want more. So, my career ambition was launched by *The Battle of Agincourt* and the music of William Walton.

The **Regal** Cinema was only a stroll to the top of my road. At the time, cinema managers were encouraged to promote their films to their local community. A popular tool was offering children painting books, whose pictures to be painted were from the film being promoted. The completed painting books were handed in to the manager who sent them off to be judged in a competition (or did they?). The film I had chosen to paint was *The Last of the Mohicans* (1947 version) also known as *The last of the Redskins*. To my surprise I won a certificate Highly Commending me for my colouring entry. Again, at one with the cinema but this time contributing something of my own to a cinema. I still have that certificate acknowledging my juvenile painting prowess.

In 1947 my parents decided to move farther up the coast to Clacton-on-Sea, a superior and popular Essex seaside resort that also boasted three cinemas, **Odeon**, **Century** (Essoldo) and **Kinema Grand** (Essoldo). Unfortunately, there was nothing grand about this cinema, so it was frequented as a last resort.

In 1948, now living in Clacton-on-Sea, I attended my third primary school following on from the first primary school in Dovercourt and the second in Harwich. My younger brother and myself were soon made aware of the infamous Saturday Morning Pictures at the 1,214-seat **Odeon** cinema. With World War II slowly inching to a conclusion, J Arthur Rank of the J Arthur Rank Organisation decided to give war weary wives, mothers and grandmothers a break. He would try to persuade them to let him have their children from seven years old to fourteen years old for two hours on Saturday mornings in his **Odeon** Cinemas enjoying a programme of entertainment films specially selected for its juvenile audience. Acutely aware of the tight domestic budgets of his mainly working-class patrons, Rank kept his **Odeon** entry charge simple – 6d for the stalls and 9d for the circle.

In 1944, Rank set up a Children's Entertainment Division within the framework of the Rank Organisation under Mary Field OBE. Over the next seven years, the CED made a number of highly successful films but it became clear as the demand developed, that no single company could be expected to accept the responsibility for maintaining the flow of children's films. Accordingly, in 1951, the British film industry joined forces to set up The Children's Film Foundation with the object of continuing production. From 1951 to 1957, the British Film Production Fund (Eady Levy), collected a voluntary levy from the industry each year allocating a proportion to the CFF. The Cinematograph Films Act (1957) made this levy statutory and the Board of Trade set up the British Film Fund Agency to take over collection and distribution of the levy. The Act also guaranteed the Foundation an unspecified yearly grant from the Fund, subject to the Board of Trade approval.

In 1944, Rank personally inspired the first British feature film made purely for children, *Tom's Ride*, produced by Gaumont-British Instructional films, which was part of his organisation. Subsequently, Rank helped to launch the children's matinée movement in 1951 – the infamous Saturday Morning Pictures. Rank's vision thrived for nearly forty years. However, children's matinées of films on general release were first introduced to Britain in 1927 by the **Granada** circuit.

From 9:30am, two queues of children, one for the stalls and one for the circle, began to form at a side entrance to the **Odeon**. Clacton, which at the time had a large Dr Barnardo residential complex and occasionally some of the boys would join the stalls queue and start a fight. The Saturday Morning Pictures was a peculiarly British cinema phenomenon. This simple entertainment of a bygone era in British cinema helped to shape the minds and morals of two generations of British children.

Ten-o'clock and across Britain hundreds of cinemas have thrown open their doors to accommodate the Saturday Morning Pictures 'rush'. A massive cheer reverberates around the country as some one million boys and girls greet the opening film, inevitably a Disney, MGM or Warner Bros cartoon. For a further two hours, the austerity and discipline pervading in post-war Britain, both in the home and in the school, is cast aside. Repressed young energy, hot air and good





The Century Clacton as Flicks in July 2007

natured rowdiness is let loose. For these thousands of children, including me, this weekly Saturday morning visit to their local cinema was the social highlight of the week. Interestingly, should the young audience go too far with their exuberance, the Odeon manager, 'Sniffer' Caro, would mount the stage and threaten to cancel the serial. He always gave them three chances to curb their enthusiasm and it always worked. After all, it was the serial we had come to see.

Steven Spielberg has been quoted as admitting that his adventure films, such as the *Indiana Jones* trilogy, were heavily influenced by the Hollywood serials of the thirties and forties with several produced by Republic Pictures. Action was the key factor, often outrageous, improbable but always exciting. Heroines were there to be rescued from a fate worse than death (whatever that was) and were not there to slow up that action with a soppy love interest. Heroes and villains were easily identified by the young audience, the former whiter than white both in appearance and morals and the latter completely the opposite. There was a lot to pack in each twenty-minute episode but pack it in they did – on a shoestring budget.



How else could you see clay people in a *Flash Gordon* serial cleverly materialise out of underground clay walls then run away from camera, clearly showing the zip fasteners in the back of their costumes. *Captain Marvel* flying ungainly through the air, held aloft by highly visible wires, *King of the Rocket Men* wearing a jazzy crash helmet to cushion his crashlanding on the ground after being propelled through the air by what looks like two oxy-acetylene cylinders on his back, or *Superman* lacking the support of a special effects budget, miraculously changing into a badly drawn cartoon figure each time he flew, or bursting through a solid object such as a wall. But we kids loved it. The loudest cheer of the morning greeted the serial because it was pure escapist fun. No-one minded the hammy acting or trite dialogue or, indeed, the so-called special effects, such as model spaceships with power that would be hard put to drive a Hornby train.

The Saturday morning serial simply was a matter of good triumphing over evil. So, if it took fifteen episodes to achieve that, it was fun waiting for that to happen. However, we must not overlook our home-grown serial, the BBC's radio serial, *Dick Barton – Special Agent* on the BBC Light Programme, 6:45pm to 7:00pm Monday to Friday and introduced by Charles Williams' stirring theme music, *The Devil's Gallop*, to millions of young boys, including me, on 7 October 1946. Noel Johnson (and later, Duncan Case) was the BBC's Dick Barton, Don Stannard was Dick Barton in three Hammer Films: *Dick Barton – Special Agent* (1948); *Dick Barton Strikes Back* (1949) and *Dick Barton at Bay* (1950). Tony Vogel played Dick Barton in the Southern Television series. Dick Barton's car was an Allard K1 Sports car and driven by him to personal appearances at Saturday Morning Pictures cinemas. Don Stannard loved speed but eventually it was speed that killed him. Apparently there also was a Dick Barton Stage Musical floating around somewhere.

The Saturday Morning Pictures was my passport to the teenage/adult world of cinema and my love affair with the Clacton Odeon. After all, Rank had gambled that introducing boys and girls from seven years old to fourteen years old to the delights and excitement of watching films in his cinemas, when they were fifteen years old, they were then too old to enjoy the Saturday morning pictures but, impregnated with the cinema-going experience, could continue to watch films in his Odeon cinemas. Of course, his gamble paid off and I was hooked. My cinema-going apprenticeship with the Saturday morning pictures had given me a springboard into the fantasy world of teenage/adult films and the marvellous cinemas in which to see them. I soon learned the art of ticket switching in the Odeon. Tickets for the cheapest seats were coloured purple, tickets for the mid-stall seats were coloured green, so to avoid sitting in the front stalls almost on top of the screen, I kept a small collection of green ticket stubs thrown away by their owners when leaving the cinema. To enter the auditorium, I had to go through two sets of doors. An usherette checked my purple ticket at the first set of doors and another usherette checked my green ticket swapped when between the two sets of doors.

Usherettes, of course, were an integral part of the 'going to the pictures' adventure. Even more so when one of the Odeon's usherettes became my girl-friend. Her father was the Odeon's ex-army Commissionaire, who, when made aware of his daughter's relationship with me, made sure that when I was in a queue outside waiting to come in, he encouraged my queue-jumping ability. He also made sure that none of us left the cinema before The National Anthem had finished playing at the end of the last screening of the feature that day, by spreading himself across the exit doors. Whatever colour ticket I offered, the other usherettes made sure that I was comfortable in the back row awaiting the delights of my favourite usherette. Allegedly, an Odeon house rule stated that usherettes were not allowed to sit with their boy-friends until the feature was on the screen for the last time that day. As feature running times could vary between 90 and 120 minutes, (sometimes longer), that gave me a lot of time to get to know my girl-friend a lot better.

In 1956, Russia invaded Hungary. Russia ignored the international condemnation of its action. I felt that some action was needed from myself. I produced a large poster depicting a scene from the savage suppression of the Hungarian people by the Russians. The centrepiece of the picture was a Russian tank threatening a Hungarian crowd. I took my poster to the Odeon manager, 'Sniffer' Caro, who mounted it in the Foyer with collection boxes for donations from his Odeon patrons, to help the campaign supporting the Hungarian people.



The Odeon Clacton as the Salon in 1980

Cinema managers were encouraged to promote their films to the local community. 'Sniffer' Caro was very keen on that. When he was to show *The Purple Mask* (1954), featuring Tony Curtis, he came up with an interesting competition. He placed in the local paper six passport-size head and shoulders photos of popular Hollywood male stars, each one wearing a mask. The challenge was to identify the stars behind the masks. It was tricky as the quality of print in local newspapers at the time often left a lot to be desired. To my amazement I named correctly all six stars. My prize? A seat in the circle with a friend to watch Tony Curtis. As I didn't have a girl-friend at the time, I took my younger brother. To sit in expensive seats in the circle for the first time was an adventure made even better by the attention of usherettes who plied us with ice cream and fizzy drinks.



When an [A] film was supported by a [U] film, I (and thousands of other young teenagers) had to be taken into the cinema by an adult as the content of the [A] film, supposedly, could be a bit rough on our tender eyes and ears. This meant that I and my friends had to wait outside the cinema and wait for an obliging adult to take us in. We never asked a couple, a lone man or ladies together to take us in. Our target was the lone female. On one occasion it was my turn to put on my pained expression and asked a lady to take me in – please. She said that she would, then pointed to my friends and asked me if they wanted to come in with her as well.



The proscenium at the Odeon [Salon] Clacton in 1980

She took eight of us in much to the surprise of 'Sniffer' Caro who was lurking in the foyer. As the lady's crocodile of kids (she was not old enough to have a couple of kids, let alone eight of them), wandered past 'Sniffer' Caro, she looked at him and said the immortal line: "And don't you say a word". Naturally, when we were in our seats, we left the kind lady and found seats elsewhere.

Probably, my most bizarre relationship with the Odeon in Clacton involved the Clacton Youth Club. A friend who knew of my ambition to work in the film industry, persuaded me to join the Youth Club as they appeared to have an amateur film group. It was run by a male school-teacher, who was one of the first Essex teachers to persuade the education authorities to include 'film' in the curriculum. As a result, his class exam results improved markedly. He introduced me to his film group, which was in the process of editing their version of *War of the Worlds* in which the Martians destroyed the Odeon cinema and pursued groups of terrified local people running for their lives. Shame really. The 1,214 seat Clacton Odeon opened in 1936 as one of the original cinemas built for the Oscar Deutsch chain of Odeon Theatres. It closed in 1975.

During the editing process, our teacher was recording music for the film on a reel-to-reel tape recorder in a soundproofed room in the Youth Club. However, the room was not as soundproofed as he expected as the recorder, in addition to the music, was also picking up the 16mm projector motor, the projector on which the edited film was being shown for him to match the music. Solution to the problem was to place the projector on a flat single-story roof outside the room and project the picture through a window to the room where he could continue his music recording. Someone, however, had to be with the projector to rectify any problems. He volunteered me for that honour. Unfortunately, being mid-winter, it began to snow and soon I was covered in snow and the film projected was out of focus. I had no idea how to re-focus and our teacher was waving his arms about trying to get me to re-focus so he did not have to stop the recorder. Eventually, he gave up and clambered on to the flat roof and re-focused the picture. I had failed my first attempt to handle filming technology. So much for the joys of amateur film making.

After *The War of the Worlds* had been premièred, we got together to decide on a follow-up film. As we were going to film inside the Youth Club, we needed to find some lights. Although at the time Clacton had several theatres I could try to borrow lights from but something told me to try the Odeon first. 'Sniffer' Caro brought Wally, the chief projectionist, into the equation and left Wally and myself to work out a deal for the Odeon's stage lights. We would be filming in the Club Wednesday evenings, so I agreed to collect the lights and cables

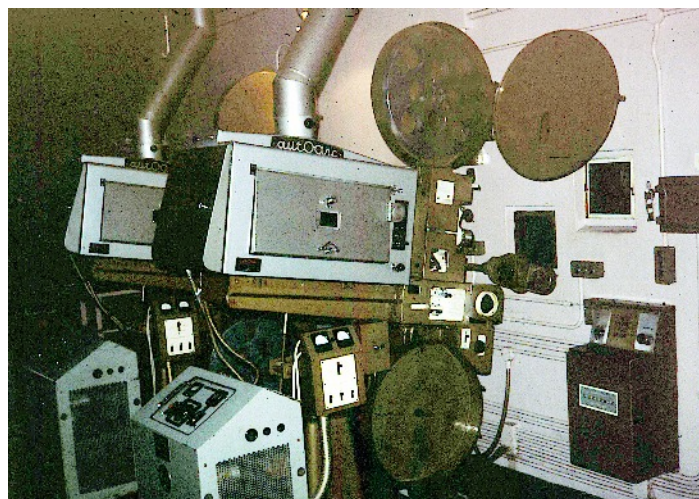
Wednesday mornings, load them on a trailer I borrowed from a builder friend of the family, pulled it a mile to the Club, offloaded it, reloaded it Thursday morning and pulled it back to Wally at the Odeon at no cost to ourselves. I did this chore for several weeks.

At the time, most people smoked, including my friends (I have never smoked). Now *Voyager* (1942), played at the Odeon and created a storm among my friends. In the last scene of the film, Bette Davis and Paul Henreid are in mid-shot facing each other. Henreid pulls out a packet of 20 cigarettes, selects two, puts both in his mouth, lights them and passes one to Davis, retaining the other in his mouth. My friends, all of whom smoked, were knocked out by that scene. When we left the cinema, they were ecstatic and tried to emulate Henreid. One friend was sick and another swallowed his cigarette. The others gave up. I was vastly amused.

In 1984, my love affair with the Clacton Odeon was terminated when that wonderful cinema was demolished, leaving me with fond memories of a rare relationship that had laid a foundation for me to achieve my ambition to work in the film industry. Indeed, I have worked, for, among many others, The British Film Institute, National Film Theatre, Rank Organisation, Ogilvy, Benson and Mather Advertising Agency television library and at twenty-one years old in management for Britain's largest independent studio – Shepperton Studios.

I have written two books on Shepperton: *Shepperton Studios – an Independent View* – The Corporate History of the Studio from 1932 to 1994 and *Shepperton Studios – A Personal View*, which lifts the lid on a traditional British Independent Studio operating before CGI, Video Assist and other modern film making technology. I present an insider view of movie making at Britain's major independent studio described by me as a 'Seat of the pants Studio', the preferred method of getting things done.

Hollywood came to Shepperton following the Senator McCarthy anti-communist so-called witch hunts in America, leading to the blacklisting of artists including Carl Foreman, Joe Losey, Hal Wallis and many others, who then abandoned Hollywood and brought 'A' list actors with them to Shepperton. In 1972 I ran the successful sixteen months public campaign to prevent the studio being demolished by City 'asset strippers' of the day. Now long retired, I am a volunteer interviewer for The British Entertainment History Project. [www.historyproject.org.uk](http://www.historyproject.org.uk). Not bad for a war baby brought up in an Essex backwater



The projection room at the Odeon [Salon] Clacton in 1980

**Postscript:** I decided to visit Clacton to see for myself if, in fact, the Odeon had been demolished and what has replaced it. Unfortunately, it has been demolished and replaced by Lloyds Pharmacy, Argos and Poundland. Surely, I thought, no-one would want to demolish a cinema that was one of the original Odeon cinemas built in the 1930s by Oscar Deutsch. Interestingly, I recall the Odeon name changed to Salon towards the end of its life, the then new proprietor attempted to drum up business by placing a speaker on the cinema's entrance steps and through which he played the soundtrack of the film currently being shown. I also vaguely recall a *Bugs Bunny* cartoon sound track in the mix.

During the Second World War, like many women, my late mother worked in a munitions factory. She survived being blown up twice. However, that trauma sadly affected her personality and she developed a fierce temper. After she had exploded by slamming a few doors in our Clacton home, she would storm out of the house. We all



knew where she had gone – round the corner to calm down in the Clacton Odeon, which provided therapy for 1s/3d. Continuous performances from around 2:30pm to around 10pm each weekday provided sanctuary for troubled minds and a safe haven away from the post war trials and tribulations that beset the country. It was not uncommon to hear male snoring emanating from a seat near you and terminated by a kind usherette.

I once again saw the alleyway running the length of the Odeon where we waited to be released into the cinema for our Saturday morning pictures thrill. The alleyway is now filled with rubbish and open to the elements. But where is the cinema staff exit door where I waited for my usherette girl-friend to escort her home? Covered up by Lloyds Pharmacy. And where is the little café attached to the Odeon? Replaced by Poundland. I have to accept that I have been evicted from my second home but not evicted from my many memories of that wonderful cinema-going period in my life and all created in and around that wonderful cinema the Odeon Clacton-on-Sea.

Sometimes in my dotage I hear doors slamming as mother races around the corner to spend a few hours of calming therapy in the local Odeon.

## MISCELLANY

### AUCTIONS

A collection of tapes of horror films was expected to fetch £300,000 in Texas. Amongst the lots is a rare Betamax tape of John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) still in its original wrapping and expected to fetch £15,000. A sealed copy of Steven Spielberg's 1975 thriller *Jaws* is also tipped to go for £15,000.

*Daily Mirror* – 31 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

The famous bikini worn by Ursula Andress in *Dr No* was expected to fetch £125,000 at the same auction house in Texas.

*Sunday Express* – 27 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

### BOND FAN'S GOLDENBUYS

A James Bond superfan has amassed the world's largest collection of Bond memorabilia. His hoard has been officially certified as a Guinness World Record for the last seven years. The 18,000 items are kept in a lock-up on an industrial estate; amongst them is a casino chip used in the first Bond film, *Dr No*.

*Daily Mirror* – 10 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

### FRONT ROW JO



The Cromer Pier and Pavilion Theatre in Norfolk has vowed to leave seat A17 empty for ever in memory of Jo Raby, who attended shows there for over 40 years. She died in September, aged 60.

*Sunday Mirror* – 4 September; photo taken September 2009

### MEERKAT MOVIES

If you use *Compare the Market* to buy any insurance policy, you will be sent a code for Meerkat Movies, which gives you two-for-one cinema tickets on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for a whole year at big-name chains such as Odeon and Cineworld.

*Metro* – 31 October; sent in by Tom Laughlan

### MOUSETRAP

Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap* is finally to open on Broadway after 70 years in London. It is the world's longest running play, with over 23,915 performances.

*Daily Express* – 26 November; sent in by Barry Quinton

### TONS OF CANNABIS

The ceiling of the Reality Theatre in Newport, South Wales, fell in under the wight of a secret cannabis farm in the roof. Hundreds of plants were removed after staff noticed a strange smell.

*Metro* – 27 October; sent in by Barry Quinton & R David Simpson

### NO CASH

We reported on p14 of the last Bulletin that the Curzon in Canterbury was "card only" and wouldn't accept cash. Now the cinema is offering a discount for under-25s – their tickets are £5, nearly 40% off the normal price. One older movie fan described it as "age discrimination".

*Kent OnLine* – 13 November; sent in by Philip Stevens

### LUNA WAREHOUSE

Permission is being sought for a warehouse for Luna Cinema on a business park near Faversham (Kent). The company operates pop-up outdoor cinemas and will use the warehouse to store their equipment. It would create 50 jobs.

*Kent OnLine* – 27 November; sent in by Philip Stevens

### ZOOM

AMC cinemas in the USA is partnering with Zoom to facilitate conference calls between "small, medium and large groups in different locations". At least 17 venues will offer the service.

*Variety* – 7 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock

### CAMRA



Four Wetherspoon pubs are featured in a new Campaign for Real Ale [CAMRA] publication listing the east of England's most traditional pubs that "still have interiors of real historical importance". Two of these are in former cinemas – the Hippodrome March and the Playhouse Colchester. The Hippodrome {19945} opened in 1928 and became a pub in March 2011. Many original art deco features survive, including the circle, moulded box fronts, a 32ft wide proscenium and a 24ft deep stage. The Playhouse {39628} opened in 1929 and films ceased in August 1981. It became a pub in December 1994 with the stage decorated with a set as if for a play and life-size models occupy seats in the balcony. This photo from April 2009 shows the view from the stage to the balcony.

*Wetherspoon News* (autumn) – sent in by Richard Lyons





# NEWSREEL

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

Allen has also added comments, where indicated.

Photos by Harry Rigby within entry, except where stated.

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

## ALTON (Hants)

The Palace finally closed last November and the building is up for sale at £850,000. The current building opened in June 1937 with 620 seats. {24101}

Alton Herald – 15 November; sent in by Darron Keeling

## AUCHTERARDER (Perth & Kinross)



Plans have been submitted to restore the former Regal and open a cinema in the building. It opened in September 1926 with 549 seats and had a pressed tin ceiling. It closed in the late 1960s and was used as an antique shop until 2019. It is hoped the cinema will be open by 2024. {47797}

Dundee Courier – 4 November; sent in by David Kay; photo taken September 2006

## BIRMINGHAM (Rubery)

The thirteen-screen Empire at Great Park has applied to build four new restaurants at the front of the cinema and two drive-thru restaurants elsewhere in the complex. It opened as a Virgin in April 1998; in 2004 it was taken over by UGC followed in 2005 by Cineworld; Empire took over in late 2006. {24152}

Bromsgrove Advertiser – 30 November

## BRADFORD (West Yorks)

Tim Ronalds Architects has returned to the multi-million project to overhaul the former Odeon cinema following the collapse of the architect it lost the job to four years ago. The building is being returned to a single space and will become a 3,800-capacity music venue. The ballroom roof has been removed revealing the rather lightweight structure that supported it. This is to be reinforced before a new roof is installed. A giant temporary roof protects the well-preserved plasterwork of the ballroom ceiling. The project is set to open in autumn 2023. {3677}

Telegraph & Argus, Bradford – 9 December; Architects' Journal – 12 December

## BRIDGWATER (Somerset)

The 'official' opening of the new seven-screen Scott Cinema was held on 24 October. The date had been pushed back by a delay in the delivery of the 700 seats, as reported on p16 of the last Bulletin. {67583}

Bridgwater Mercury – 25 October

## BRIGHTON

The Theatres Trust has warned that redevelopment plans for the Grade II\* listed Hippodrome are "highly compromised" and will prevent its return to full-scale theatre use. It was built in 1897 and closed in early 1964. It was later a bingo hall but has been unused since the early 2000s. The current owners bought it in 2020. {36884}

The Stage – 20 October; sent in by Barry Quinton

## BROUGHTY FERRY (Dundee)



A bid to demolish the B listed former Regal has been rejected. A structural examination deemed it "dangerous" and forced the garage that occupied it to move out. The building is currently shrouded in scaffolding. It began life as an army volunteer hall in 1870 and became a cinema in 1936, when a circle was added. It closed in 1960 in favour of bingo, which closed in June 1991. Since 2007 it has been used as a car showroom but the foyer was demolished. {23054}

Evening Telegraph, Dundee – 22 October; photo taken September 2006

## BURNLEY (Lancs)

The Grade II listed Empire has been bought by the group fighting to save it. The next steps are to carry out a full condition survey and fundraise for any immediate repair works and the longer-term restoration project. {36755}

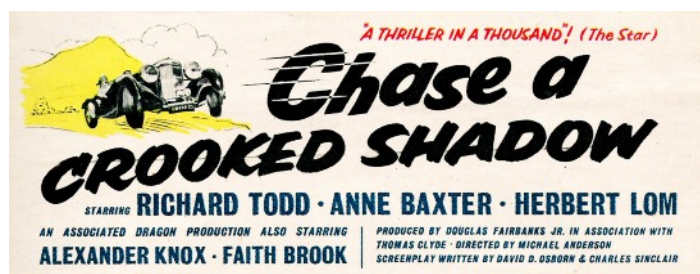
Burnley Express – 5 December

## BURY ST EDMUNDS (Suffolk)



We reported on p19 Bulletin 56/4 that Pat Church of the Abbeygate Cinema had been awarded the BEM in the Queen's Birthday Honours. He has now been presented the award by the Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk, Clare FitzRoy, Dowager Countess of Euston at a ceremony on the stage of the cinema. {24294}

Suffolk News – 9 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock





## BUXTON (Derbys)



The Grade II\* listed Opera House is to receive Arts Council funding for the first time. It presents about 450 performances a year and the annual Gilbert & Sullivan Festival has just moved back there after a few years in Harrogate. It is due to celebrate its 120<sup>th</sup> birthday in June. It was used as a cinema from 1948 until the mid-1970s. {2062}

*Derbyshire Live* – 7 November; sent in by John West; photo taken May 2007

## CLEVEDON (Somerset)

Work on restoring the balcony at the Grade II listed Curzon started last March and was due to be completed by September but has been hit by delays. The balcony has been closed since 1973 but when the £70,000 project is completed it will seat an additional 50 patrons and increase the cinema's capacity by 30%. The original 1920s chandeliers have been refurbished and some of the original seating has been reupholstered and some pre-loved sofas and armchairs have been sourced. The area had been used to store items collected over the years, such as 8mm cameras, 9.5mm projectors and "weird pieces of machinery". These were given away in 19 November, with donations requested. {846}

*SomersetLive* – 17 November

**Editor's Note:** I suspect this is the equipment collected by the late Maurice Thornton.

## DERBY

The upper floors of the former Gaumont have been put on the market. The space was last used as the Zanzibar nightclub. The restaurant business that operates downstairs is not affected. The cinema opened in September 1934 and finally closed in December 1988. The interior was gutted. {14897}

*Derbyshire Live* – 1 November; sent in by Roger Fox

## DOVER (Kent)

The 70-seat Silver Screen cinema has decided to close for three months until the Dover Film Festival in March. Reasons given include the decline in footfall, lack of films, the energy crisis and projector costs. Their cinema in Folkestone will remain open "for now". {24670}

*Kent OnLine* – 16 December; sent in by Philip Stevens

## EDINBURGH (Central)

We reported on p17 of the last Bulletin of the closure of the B listed Filmhouse. There were 14 bids to buy the building, including one from the operator of the Prince Charles cinema in London and another from a group of supporters of the Filmhouse. Neither was successful and it is believed the highest price bid won. The future of the building is now in doubt and it is feared it will not reopen as a cinema. It is understood that the rights to the Film Festival have been secured. {23226}

*The Times, Scotland* – 4,27 November; *The Herald, Glasgow* – 4 November; *BBC News website* – 15 December; sent in by Tom Laughlan

## EGHAM (Surrey)

The new four-screen Everyman opened in September. The seating capacities are 96, 83, 59 and 35. All screens have NEC laser projection and Dolby 7.1 digital sound and screen ④ is equipped with RealD 3D. {67705}

Sent in by Tim McCullen

## GLASGOW (Central)



A petition has been launched to stop the Ambassador Theatre Group [ATG] taking over the Pavilion Theatre after it was put on the market last September. ATG already owns two other theatres in Glasgow, the King's Theatre and the Theatre Royal as well as the Edinburgh Playhouse.

*Glasgow Live* – 7 December; photo taken on a rainy day in December 2006

## HAMILTON (South Lanark)

Plans have been approved to develop the B-listed former La Scala / Gaumont into a five-storey block of 23 social rented flats. The existing façade will remain but the auditorium was demolished in 2008. The cinema opened in March 1927 and films ceased in November 1960. It was converted into a bingo club, last known as the Vogue. {23257}

*Glasgow Evening Times* – 23 November; see Bulletin 55/1 front cover & p24

## HOYLAKE (Wirral)

There is still no deadline set for the £4m project to convert the former Town Hall into a cinema with housing above. The developer says that a majority of restoration and refurbishment work has been completed. There are serious concerns about wastage of taxpayers' money.

*Wirral Globe* – 26 October; *Liverpool Echo* – 28 October

## IPSWICH (Suffolk)

A coffee house has opened in the former Odeon. The cinema opened in August 1991 with five screens and closed in August 2005. The building has been home to the Hope Church since October 2021. {13679}

*Ipswich Star* – 20 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock

## KESWICK (Cumbria)

The Alhambra is to host the inaugural Mint Chinese Film Festival from 3-5 February. Local film enthusiasts and families will also be able to enjoy the specialist weekend, as co-owner Carol Rennie plans to put on a series of activities for people to get involved. The rest of the festival will focus on specialist films, which will all feature English subtitles. In October, Dr Rennie also organised a Diwali celebration, where the Alhambra showed two Indian films, served Indian food and put on a free traditional Indian dance workshop that 60 people attended. {3150}

*Cumbria Crack* – 22 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock

## 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](mailto:contact@theppt.org)

[www.theppt.org](http://www.theppt.org)



### LEEDS (West Yorks)

The Grade II listed Hyde Park Picture House has announced that it will reopen in April. Refurbishment work began in spring 2021, funded by the National Lottery and Leeds City Council. There will be a new 52-seat screen in the basement. {1836}

*Yorkshire Evening Post – 8 December*

### LEICESTER

A new extension to the Phoenix is due to open on 20 January. It will house two additional cinema screens (making a total of four), a larger gallery and a new café/bar. It has been six years in the making. {35252}

*Phoenix Cinema Press Release – 15 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

### LIVERPOOL (Anfield)



The former Gaumont has had a £25,000 revamp. It operates as the Liverpool Lighthouse with a 430-seat auditorium (in the former circle?). A 10m electric screen has been installed. It reopened with a free sing-along screening of *The Greatest Showman* on 3 December. The building first opened on December 1931 with 1,600 seats and closed in November 1960. It became a DIY store and was converted into the Lighthouse in 1998. {34476} photo taken July 2007

*Liverpool Echo – 23, 28 November; sent in by Gary Donaldson & David Simpson*

### LONDON (ACTON)



A crowdfunding campaign has enabled the Act One cinema to start work on a 60-seat second screen. The venue opened with a 77-seat screen in the Old Library building in September 2021. {65790}

*Sent in by Elliot Griffiths; photo taken May 2016*

### LONDON (Battersea)

Located on the third floor of Turbine Hall B in the refurbished iconic former Battersea Power Station, the Cinema in the Power Station opened in November. The two screens seat 213 and 137, each with four VIP boxes across the rear. {67939}. It is operated by the operators of the almost adjacent three-screen Cinema in the Arches, which opened in March 2019. The *Cinema Treasures* entry for the latter contains a short history of the Power Station. {59989}

*Sent in by Tim McCullen*

### LONDON (Canning Town)

A new three-screen cinema has been announced in partnership with the London Film School. No operator or time scale has been given.

*Sent in by Tim McCullen*

### LONDON (East Ham)

Demolition of the former two-screen Boleyn (ex Odeon) has commenced. The cinema opened in July 1938 with 2,212 seats and closed in October 1981. After being unused for 14 years, it was tripled and reopened as a Bollywood cinema. It was closed in early 2014 to convert the former twin screens in the stalls into a banquet hall and the former balcony was converted into two screens, which opened early-2015. It was closed in March 2020 but had a partial short-lived reopening in 2021. {14651}

*Sent in by Tim McCullen*

### LONDON (Holloway)



The Wetherspoons pub in the former Savoy/ABC has been added to the list of their pubs up for sale. It will continue to operate as a Wetherspoons until it is sold. The cinema opened in February 1940 as it was virtually complete when war broke out the previous September. It became the Coronet in 1979 and films ceased in June 1983. It became a Wetherspoons pub in March 1996, using the Coronet name. The restoration was done particularly well and still retains the atmosphere of a suburban movie palace. {4301}

*My London – 25 November; sent in by Gary Donaldson & Ken Roe; photo taken September 2004*

### LONDON (Mayfair)

A campaign has been launched to save the Grade II listed Curzon. The lease is up for renewal and according to Westminster Councillor Patrick Lilley, who started the petition, Curzon now expects the landlord to either apply for a redevelopment of the property or to become an owner operator. It opened in April 1966 with 524 seats on a single level and was twinned in 2002 with 320 seats in the former front stalls and 83 seats in the former rear stalls. The CTA has written to the Councillor in support. See Casework p5. {7507}

*Evening Standard – 30 November, 9 December; sent in by Barry Quinton*

### LONDON (Swiss Cottage)

The freehold of the five-screen Odeon Luxe is on the market for £2 million. Odeon has the property on a 99-year lease from 25 December 1933 at a fixed rent ground rent of £2,600 per annum. The estate agent's particulars can be seen at [www.acuitus.co.uk/property/4393](https://www.acuitus.co.uk/property/4393). See photo p3 last Bulletin. {13786}

*Sent in by Darron Keeling*

### LONDON (Waterloo)

The BFI IMAX has reopened after major upgrades. The screen is 85ft wide by 65ft high and has laser projection. Improvements also include new seats, carpeting and four wheelchair spaces in the 493-seat auditorium. {19982}

*Daily Mail – 11 November; South London Press – 16 November*

### LONDON (Wood Green)

The Grade II\* listed former Gaumont Palace has been added to Historic England's *Buildings at Risk* register. It opened in March 1934 and films ceased in January 1984. It was de-tripled and became a bingo hall, which closed in July 1996. After laying empty for three years, it was converted into a church with a nightclub in the former restaurant. The auditorium is well looked-after but in 2018 a piece of cornicing on the building's exterior fell to the street below. It was discovered the steel girders supporting the high-level decorative details were extensively corroded. A repair solution is now being prepared, while the front of the building remains under scaffolding for public safety. {17332}

*Evening Standard – 10 November*



### LONG EATON (Derbys)

The owner of the former New Palace / Ritz says he is being painted as the 'bad guy' over a failed scheme to turn the building into a cultural hub with café and a cinema. However, the Council said he had no viable plan and has now dropped its support for the scheme, even though it secured £5.59 million in funding from the Government's Town Deal fund; this money has instead been distributed among other projects. The venue opened as a live theatre in July 1913 and closed in February 1983. It was later converted into a supermarket downstairs and a 230-seat cinema upstairs, called the Screen, which closed in October 1996 due to the death of its owner. It subsequently became a pub and nightclub. See p21 Bulletin 56/1. {37625}

*Derbyshire Live – 9 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

### MANCHESTER (Central)

The nineteen-screen Vue at The Printworks has had a revamp. Each screen now has luxury recliner seating with tables and drinks holders. Work on the screens was completed last September with the remainder of the £22m project completed in November. The venue was opened in November 2000 by UCI and became an Odeon in 2004; at one time it had 23 screens. The venue is home to Europe's second largest IMAX. {25060}

*Manchester Evening News – 27 November*

### NEWTON ABBOT (Devon)

Plans to redevelop the Grade II listed Alexandra have been dropped. The Council has been asked to commit a further £600,000 towards the building of a new four-screen cinema. {25182}

*Herald Express, Torquay – 16 November*

### OSWESTRY (Shropshire)

The 79-seat KinoKulture is due to close in March because of rising bills and uncertainty about its future. It opened in September 2010 in a former chapel. The seats came from a closed multiplex in Chester. {46915}

*Oswestry & Border Counties Advertiser – 15 November*

### PAIGNTON (Devon)

Open days were held at the Picture House so the public could see plans and a model of how the restored venue could look. The exterior has been cleaned and restored and interior work is due to start in 2023. Your editor couldn't find much more information as the Trust's website has not been updated since 2020. {22124}

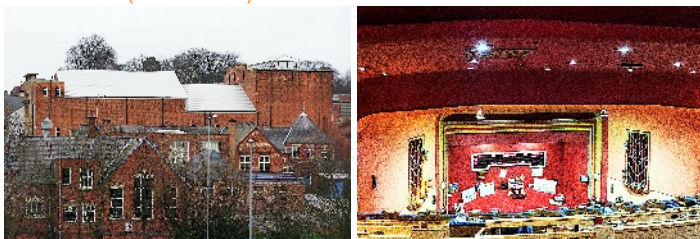
*Herald Express, Torquay – 16 November*

### RAMSGATE (Kent)

Ownership of 700 collapsible chairs from the Winter Gardens in Margate has been transferred to the Granville Cinema in Ramsgate. The Winter Gardens was closed in August and the building secured. As the building is vacant, the chairs would be vulnerable to further deterioration. The Granville is being returned to a single 600-seat auditorium and the chairs will be used there. It is hoped to open in April. {15019}

*Isle of Thanet News – 5 November; sent in by Margaret Burgoine*

### RUSHDEN (Northants)



Flutters bingo in the former Ritz closed on 19 December with the owners citing rising costs. The cinema opened in November 1936 with 721 seats in the stalls and 470 in the circle and a large stage with fly tower. The stage was used by local amateur companies and in the 1960s by various pop groups. It was closed and converted into a bingo club in September 1982 but films continued to be screened during school holiday afternoons into the mid-1980s. {36519}

*Northamptonshire Telegraph – 24 November; exterior photo on front cover sent in by Darron Keeling & John Wilmott [interior photo above R]*

### SALISBURY (Wilts)



Scaffolding around the former Regal/ABC carries a banner saying that a new four-screen Everyman will open in the building in spring 2023. The plans aim to "restore and highlight art deco features, with the foyer, lounge and waiting areas to be furnished with loose sofas, tables and other furniture." The building opened in February 1936 with 1,608 seats and became a bingo hall in January 1969; that closed in March 2020. {2449}

*Salisbury Journal – 1 December; photo taken March 2009*

### SHEFFIELD (Attercliffe)

The Council has approved plans to buy and renovate the Grade II listed former Adelphi using a share of an allocated £17m levelling up fund. If the project is approved, work could begin almost immediately. The cinema opened in October 1920 and closed in October 1967. It was subsequently used for bingo, a nightclub and most recently for storage. {22683}

*Star, Sheffield – 2 November; BBC News website – 8 November; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo on front cover*

### SHEFFIELD (Nether Edge)

A new bar opened in December in the foyer of the Abbeydale cinema. This comes as a fundraising campaign was recently launched to help keep the historic building going. While the building's main auditorium remains out of action, the fly tower has already been repurposed to host events including independent screenings, exhibitions and gigs. {22681}

*The Star, Sheffield – 13 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

### SKELMERSDALE (Lancs)

The two-screen Capitol is under threat of closure due to criminal damage, allegedly carried out by teenagers aged between 12 and 14. The cinemas opened in the Concourse Shopping Centre in 1973 with 230 and 248 seats; each auditorium now has 125 seats. {65200}

*Liverpool Echo – 22 November; sent in by David Simpson*

### SLOUGH



The ten-screen Empire closed suddenly on 8 December. The company referred to the redevelopment of the area and said that trading would become increasingly difficult. It opened as the Maybox in November 1987 and has had several operators since. It is not clear whether the closure is intended to be permanent or only for the duration of the works. There is a possibility that the Adelphi could be used to screen films instead. {24512}

*Slough & Bucks Observer – 9 December; Berkshire Live – 17 October; sent in by Roger Fox & R David Simpson; photo taken April 2015*

### QUOTATIONS

Another cinematic quotation from the list sent by Gavin McGrath:

◆ His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork.

*Mae West – about the villain Ace Lamont (John Miljan) in Belle of the Nineties (1934)*



## SOUTHAMPTON

Residents have backed plans to turn the former Atherley into a church but have raised concerns about parking. The cinema opened in September 1912 and closed in November 1975. The small balcony was converted into offices and the rest became a bingo club, which closed due to the pandemic. [\[21350\]](#)

*Southern Daily Echo – 21 November; sent in by Ian Patterson*

## ST LEONARDS (East Sussex)

The 100-seat Kino-Teatr has launched an appeal to repair flood damage caused by recent heavy rainfalls. The owners said water broke through the roof and damaged equipment and part of the interior of the building. The venue opened in July 2015 in the shell of the former Kinema Palace / Curzon. [\[42972\]](#)

*Sussex World – 23 November*

## STAFFORD



Wetherspoons has spent £700,000 refurbishing the Picture House following flooding up to bar level in October 2019. The opportunity was taken to restore the original fibrous ceiling and to reinstate the stairs to the balcony. The company opened the Grade II listed building as a pub in March 1997. Popular films are now shown weekly on an area above the back bar, which will have been the location of the original screen. [\[22692\]](#)

*Wetherspoon News – Winter 2022; sent in by Jeremy Perkins; photo taken July 2022*

The former Odeon is to become a live music venue called Apollo Stafford. The venue is currently undergoing renovations with an aim to have the main room (former screen ①) open by late March. The former screen ② will have rehearsal rooms and a music studio and screen ③ will remain seated for comedians, independent film, lectures and private hire. The building opened in October 1936 with 956 seats, one of the smallest original Odeons. [\[22874\]](#)

*Stafford FM – 10 December; sent in by Allan Pointon*

## STOWMARKET (Suffolk)



The manager of the Regal, David Marsh, has taken a new post at a venue in Essex. David arrived at the Regal in 2005 and saw cinema admissions grow from 6,000 to 115,000 per year. He also led a £3.6 million expansion project, which included two new screens as well as a café and bar area. Among the moments that stand out during his time as manager was the devastating fire in 2009 that put the cinema out of business for six months. Deputy manager Beth Couch will be taking on David's role. [\[6241\]](#)

*Suffolk News – 13 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock; photo taken May 2018*

## SUTTON COLDFIELD (West Midlands)

The four-screen Empire (ex Odeon) is due to reopen early in 2023; it has been closed since November 2020. Campaigners had been trying to stop the sale of its car park for a retirement home but the cinema says the money raised will help towards upgrading. There will be new carpets, internal repainting and brand-new seating, including sofas. See Casework p5. [\[15012\]](#)

*Birmingham Mail – 16 November, 1 December*

## TYLORSTOWN (Rhondda Cynon Taff)



The announcement of the Welsh football team for the World Cup was made in November from the stage of the Welfare Hall. It was built in 1933 and films ceased in 1973. Later used as a community hall, it was reopened in 1998 for film use and other community projects. It is listed Grade II. [\[26656\]](#)

*Spotted by your editor; 2012 photo by Scott Lewis*

## WALSALL (West Midlands)

Permission has been refused to convert the Grade II listed former Imperial into flats. The CTA had issued a formal objection to the proposals. It was built as an Agricultural Hall in 1868 and was screening films by 1908. It closed as a cinema in May 1968 and became a bingo club, which closed around 1996. It was converted into a Wetherspoons pub, which closed in March 2016. [\[24723\]](#)

*Express & Star – 26 November*

## WESTON-SUPER-MARE (Somerset)

The organ in the Grade II listed Odeon was heard for the first time in three years last November. It had not been played as a result of previous Covid restrictions and general maintenance. The instrument was installed in 1935 when the cinema was built. [\[13851\]](#)

*BBC News website – 20 November*

## WIDNES (Cheshire)



Two plaques have been unveiled on the Wetherspoons pub in the former Premier. One details the history of the HMS Widnes, sunk in 1941 by German aircraft. The second is in honour of Corporal Geoffrey Caton SAS who first joined the Widnes Territorials and was the only British soldier killed in a raid on Sicily in July 1943. The cinema opened in June 1915 and films ceased in 1959. It became a motorcycle shop then a Wetherspoons pub in June 2001. [\[34672\]](#)

*Wetherspoon News (autumn); sent in by Richard Lysons; photo taken February 2006*



## WINDSOR

Plans have been submitted to transform the Windsor Yards shopping centre. The redevelopment will include a four-screen 'boutique' cinema with 307 seats. No operator or time scale has been given.

*Slough & South Bucks Observer – 11 November; sent in by R David Simpson*

## WOLVERHAMPTON

The two-screen Light House has closed for perhaps the last time. It opened in March 1987 and has struggled in recent years. Three possible buyers have expressed an interest. {25862}

*Wolverhampton Chronicle – 11 November; BBC News website – 18 November*

## WORTHING (West Sussex)

Worthing Borough Council reports that feedback has shown "limited support" for a scheme to extend the Connaught cinema and build a hotel as part of redevelopment of its Union Place site (the former police station and NCP car park). The new plans are for 200 homes only and these have been put out for consultation and feedback. {23914}

*The Argus – 1 December; sent in by Allen Eyles*

## LATE NEWS

### CANTERBURY (Kent)

A 'To Let' sign has appeared on the closed two-screen Odeon (ex ABC). It closed in March 2020 due to the Covid pandemic and in August 2022 Odeon announced that the closure would be permanent. At one time was used as a Covid vaccination centre. The cinema opened as the Regal in August 1933 and was twinned in August 1972 for cinema and bingo; the bingo operation became the second screen in August 1988. {15034}

*Sent in by Ken Roe*

### PITSEA (Essex)

Demolition of the former Century has begun. A judicial hearing last February ordered the owners to either demolish or develop the site. The venue closed on bingo in 2009 and soon squatters took over. There was a fire in September 2019 and the building was derelict. It is likely that flats will be built. The cinema opened in March 1930 with 570 seats on a single floor. Films ceased in October 1970. {28704}

*Basildon, Canvey & Southend Echo – 27 December; sent in by Margaret Burgoine*

### SITTINGBOURNE (Kent)

The New Century cinema in the circle of the former Odeon closed on 29 December as the lease had expired. The operator said she would like to continue in the town if suitable premises could be found. The bingo operation in the former stalls closed last August. A seven-screen Light cinema opened nearby in May 2021. {25352}

*Kent OnLine – 30 December; sent in by Ken Roe & Philip Stevens*

### SOUTHSEA (Hants)

Southsea Community Cinema and Arts Centre opened in a blaze of publicity last May but the dream is turning into a nightmare as they are fast running out of cash. It has put on numerous screenings of arthouse and older mainstream films as well as theatrical plays but has failed to get enough bottoms on seats to break even. The venue has now put out a "use it or lose it" plea to locals. "We don't want to give up the screenings so we might have to give up the café or the workshops or the educational activities. We are all volunteers – nobody has taken a salary." {67171}

*The News, Portsmouth – 19 December*

### STONE (Staffs)

The charity behind the new 200-seat Crown Wharf Theatre has secured £495,000 of funding for the project. It will enable a heating, ventilation and cooling system to be installed along with cinema equipment and high-quality lighting. The shell of the theatre was built as a gift to the town by Joules Brewery as part of its Crown Wharf pub development. The venue is expected to open later in 2023. [www.crownwharftheatre.org.uk](http://www.crownwharftheatre.org.uk)

*Express & Star, Wolverhampton – 19 December*

### ULVERSTON (Cumbria)

The group wanting to buy the Roxy has received £300,000 from the Government's Community Ownership Fund towards the purchase and renovation of the building. There is a 310-seat cinema in the former circle and the Laurel and Hardy Museum occupies the former stalls. {18520}

*Westmorland Gazette – 12 December; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

## HOLIDAY SNAPS

### COLMAR (France)



The Colisee was seized by bailiffs back in February – there is a notice on the door saying it was "closed against our will". It appears to have had five screens and occasionally housed pop concerts. {37957}

### STRASBOURG (France)



The Vox is a very active arthouse: [www.cine-vox.com](http://www.cine-vox.com). The Odyssée, in the same street as the Vox, had extensive building work going on when I was there and it was impossible to photograph – it seems to have reopened and is showing arthouse films. You can find out about it at [www.cinemaodysee.com](http://www.cinemaodysee.com). Vox – {29298}; Odyssée – {29297}

*Anthony Willis; photos taken last September*

## CARTOON CORNER



*From ABC Film Review; sent in by Ben Doman*



# LETTERS

## CLASSIC SHEFFIELD

I was surprised to see, on page 10 of the last Bulletin, the **Classic Cinema** in Sheffield described as the “Electric” Palace. According to the late Dr Clifford Shaw’s extensive research, a summary of which is available in the CTA Archive, the original name was “**Electra Palace**” from the opening in 1911 until it reopened as the **News Theatre** on 8 September 1945 (not 1949). I understand that the building was rejected for listing before the 1984 fire. The inspector clearly missed the fact that the original proscenium surround was substantially intact behind a later screen. This only became apparent when the roof was off and the walls were coming down [see photo R]. There’s much more to say about the **Electra Palace** than the article reveals.



Mike Higginbottom

I’m probably not the first to point out that the caption and article refer to the Electric Palace but the name on the cinema in the picture is **Electra**.

Kevin Wheelan

Tim McCullen’s article on Sheffield’s **Classic Cinema** (Bulletin 56/6) brought back many memories. I can remember being deposited there in its **News Theatre** days during the mid-1950s while the adults went about more important business. A much-truncated version of *Noah’s Ark* (1928) sticks in the memory, especially watery havoc created by the deluge as it swept its way through the temple, bringing down pillars and pagan edifices onto fleeing heathens. In my late teens (the **News Theatre** had by now been renamed the **Classic**) I spent Sunday afternoons enjoying one-day-only screenings of vintage films such as *The Red Badge of Courage* (1951), *Richard III* (1955) and *War and Peace* (1956). Packed houses and appreciative audiences on all occasions. In 1966 it showed *The War Game*, banned by the BBC for depicting the aftermath of nuclear war in too disturbing a fashion. The film was taken up by the British Film Institute and shown at its regional film theatres. As Sheffield’s **Film Theatre** had not yet opened, the **Classic** was chosen to screen it and I remember joining a lengthy queue one afternoon to see what the controversy was about. Less exalted fare was also on offer, including all-night programmes of kung fu and horror films.

The billiard hall in the basement later became a snooker hall with a more drastic change of use taking place in 1952 when a planning application was submitted for “alterations to basement of news theatre to form snack bar; alterations to form cafeteria, kitchen, etc, for E Gabrielidis and T Kazakos”. This became the Queen’s Restaurant, which opened the following year as Sheffield’s first Greek restaurant. I enjoyed my first workplace Christmas meal there in 1966, though I recall it was serving less exotic fare by then. By 1972 it was a curry house – the Indus Restaurant – which remained in business until the fire of 1984. There may also have been a bar in the basement, possibly called the King’s Head but I’ve been unable to verify this.

The **Classic** had an interesting external decorative feature. The metal handles on the plate glass entrance doors were in the shape of strips of film, supposedly replicas of those on the doors of the **Classic Baker Street**. They survived the fire but disappeared shortly afterwards. This is the only photograph of them that I’ve been able to trace:

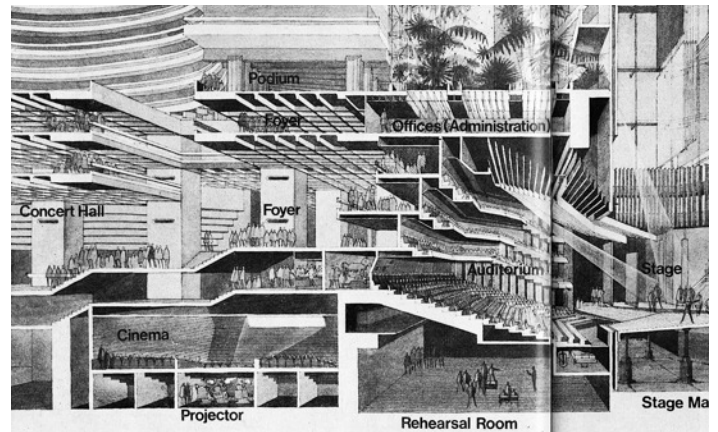
[tinyurl.com/sheff-class-doors](http://tinyurl.com/sheff-class-doors).

Sheffield Archives hold a number of relevant documents, including the building’s original plans from 1910-1911; an undated plan showing the proposed method of fixing a light box to the front elevation of the building; a valuation report dated c1933; the 1952 planning application mentioned above.

I can add to the list of other City centre cinemas – all long gone: **Palace Union Street**; **Cinema House Barker’s Pool**; **Central Picture House The Moor** (bombed 1940, demolished 1961); **Hippodrome Cambridge Street**. But there is another new-ish cinema: **The Light in The Moor** (opened 14 April 2017)

Terry Hanstock (native of Sheffield but now resident of Mapperley, Nottingham)

## BARBICAN



Since the queries about the **Barbican Centre Cinema** appeared in The Bulletin some time ago, I have been looking out for an image. I found it yesterday, published in an *Illustrated London News* of 1971. Although it doesn’t have a long section through the cinema it does clearly show the intended projection arrangements. I know the story well as I was the first Technical Manager of the Centre, having been appointed some five months before the opening. The box under the auditorium was fully fitted out including projector extracts but no machines and the ports were concrete! The operation box was equipped with a single 16mm/35mm Philips machine with a cakestand. This proved unsuitable for the programming and soon two machines were installed together with a tower. This was much more efficient operationally.

Roger Fox

## PICKWICK VISIT

I was saddened to see the reference to the likely closure early next year of the **Pickwick Theatre** in Oak Ridge, Chicago (CTA international news email newsletter 867, December). My wife and I visited this magnificent art deco cinema when on a voyage of discovery of the best of Frank Lloyd Wright buildings in nearby Oak Park, Chicago in the 1980s. We discovered it when visiting the famous architect’s houses nearby and we were on our way back to Chicago O’Hare airport to catch a plane home later in the afternoon. We bumped into a gentleman in the offices in the same block as the cinema who asked if he could help. We explained that we wanted to see the cinema and asked if he knew when it would be open. He turned out to be a lawyer to one of whose clients owned the cinema and kindly rang his client: within a few minutes someone had turned up to show us around on a personal tour! It was a revelation: the interior dating from 1928 was completely intact, down to the tab curtains. Sadly, we never had the opportunity to see a film there...

Robert Gurd

## HOLIDAY SNAPS

A few additions to the two photos from Brussels from Mr Barker on p27 of the last Bulletin.

The former **Pathé Palace** was designed by the very distinguished Belgian architect Paul Hamesse and opened on 18 December 1913. It was long the most prominent upmarket cinema of the **Pathé** chain in Brussels. As built, it originally had two U-shaped balconies. Seating 2,500 in fixed and table service seating, four bars and a café, as well as a winter garden and with two separate entrances. Remodelled in 1950 by Rie Haan, it closed as a cinema in 1973 and became a shop but with some degree of local listing protection in place since 1997. In 1999 a very elaborate and expensive scheme to return it to cinema use under the name **Kladaradatasch** (Yiddish) did not operate for very long and it passed to the ownership of the French Community for possible theatre use.

The **Mirano** first opened in 1934 but was completely rebuilt to the design of Rene Ajoux in 1951. It closed in 1976 and became a discotheque, which retained some 1950’s cinema features when I visited in the early 1990s. It also has some protection from local listing. A sister cinema, the **Marignan** dating from 1959, lives across the street and is very similar, last in use as an event space with three rooms. The **Marignan** closed as a cinema in 1979.

Bob Bradshaw



## THE LOST KING

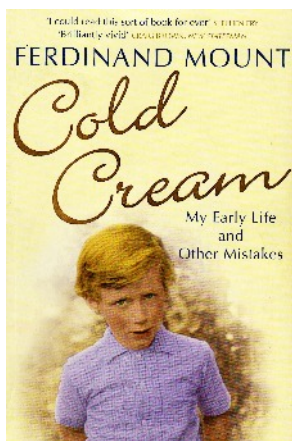
Members may have seen the recent film *The Lost King* about Richard III. The story was that he was killed at the Battle of Bosworth, his body was taken to Leicester and thrown in the River Soar there. A plaque used to be on the West Bridge in Leicester stating this. However, a lady (Philipa) was not so sure of this and set about trying to find the truth. The film charts her struggle to find the body and after some setbacks the body was finally found in a Council yard in Leicester. There are some excellent views of the centre of the City, including the clock tower, Victoria Arcade and Leicester station. Phillipa is honoured and the body is re-interred in Leicester Cathedral in 2018. Interestingly the place where the body was found is less than ¼ mile from my old school so that every day I went to school I passed very near to the burial place, Leicester Cathedral is right next door to the old school, which is now used by the Cathedral. If the film is still on circuit it is recommended to pay a visit to your cinema. It is classified as a [12A] (possibly due to the unnecessary inclusion of two swear words); without this it would be a [12] film.

Ian Patterson

## SALISBURY CINEMAS AFTER THE WAR

I am currently enjoying reading the autobiography of Ferdinand Mount, one time newspaper editor and head of Margaret Thatcher's Policy Unit, entitled *Cold Cream*. The book charts his life growing up in Wiltshire after the Second World War and I was pleased to read that he shares our passion for cinemas:

"My earliest memories of film-going are not like most people's. The moment the house lights dim I am not rapt in an enchanted world. On the contrary, I am gripped with nervous impatience as soon as the Pearl and Dean Parthenon fades and the film starts. My attention begins to wander from the screen to the wonderful internal decoration of the Gaumont Salisbury. Outside the cinema is the replica of a black-and-white medieval guildhall; inside, its walls are covered with the most amazing plaster turrets and prancing knights. So it is a disappointment when the film my mother has chosen for us happens to be on at the Regal in the market or the Odeon."



By Odeon he is referring to the (New) Picture House, now City Hall, not the present Odeon. The above image is from the Gaumont photograph album of the cinema when it was opened, which is held in the CTA Archive.

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

## ERRATA

A member, David Barker, has picked up a typographical error in the Heritage Casework section of the last Bulletin. It is in the Plaza/Odeon Gloucester section, stating that it is in 'Conversation Area' rather than a 'Conservation Area'. I'm afraid predictive text has had its way here.

Richard Gray



## UNIDENTIFIED CINEMAS

Here is an update on all of the mystery photos published since I took on the task from Brian, which have been identified.

### Bulletin 55/3, page 23:

230 – Not a cinema but a shop located at 90a/b Broadway, Bexleyheath, Kent. (Solved by me.)

### Bulletin 55/4, page 15:

147 – Plaza/Century Cinema, Bedford. (Solved by me.)  
D09 – Ritz/ABC/Coronet, Turnpike Lane, Harringay, London. (Solution came via my Flickr albums courtesy of ABC1&2.)

### Bulletin 55/5, page 7:

047 – Walpole Picture Theatre Ealing, London. (Solution came via the Bulletin, courtesy of John Griffiths.)  
AS8 – Co-Op Hall (cinema), Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire. (Solution courtesy of Clive Polden.)  
Int106 – Ritz/ABC Birkenhead, Cheshire. (Solution came via my Flickr albums, suggested by ABC1&2, confirmed by Ian Grundy.)

### Bulletin 55.6, page 28:

292/F18: advertising for the Cosy Cinema, Dolgellau, Merioneth, Wales. (Solved by me.)

### Bulletin 56/1, page 27:

324 – Not a cinema, 188, High Street, Merton, London. (Solved by me.)  
329 – Electric/Colony Cinema, Union Street, Torquay, Devon. (Solved by me.)  
540 – Not a cinema but a Co-op in Woodhorne Road, Ashington, Northumberland. (Solved by me.)  
Ex219 – Not a cinema but a Co-op in Shepshed, Leicestershire. (Solved by me.)  
G29 – Globe Cinema, Bulford Camp, Wiltshire. (Solved by me.)

Darron Keeling

## SIR SYDNEY HELPS PLAZA CROSBY OBTAIN FILM.

On 6 September 2014, Sir Sydney Samuelson CBE, Patron of the Plaza Community Cinema Crosby, Liverpool, was in attendance [R], when the cinema celebrated its 75th birthday with the screening of *Gone with the Wind*. Sir Sydney, who sadly passed away on 14 December 2022, helped them obtain the film *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*, their first screening on 18 July 1997, after the renovation of the theatre. I had the pleasure of chatting to him in the foyer. Here is what he said about obtaining the film for the Plaza.



"I got a phone call out of the blue from Jan Dunn, who said, I understand that you are a trouble-shooter and a fixer and you know about the British cinema industry, could I come and see you – and she did. The cinema was renovated and for the opening they wanted a box office smash hit. The film that everybody was talking about was *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* and I was asked if it was possible to get it. I phoned Percy Livingstone, who was the chief of 20th Century Fox. He said, Sydney, you understand the barring system; the big halls have the first call. I then phoned Sir Richard Attenborough, who had been a friend for many years. I asked if there was anything I could do. He said, you can wait for a few hours until the offices open in Los Angeles and let me speak to a friend of mine and I'll phone you back. He phoned me back and said, Steven Spielberg said that it is fine. They were so appreciative at the Plaza."

David A Ellis [photo]

**Editor's Note:** See Necrology on p30.

## SMALL ADS

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

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



# REWINDING BACK

Sent in by David A Ellis

## Sales and Acquisitions

GEORGE PRINCE ACQUIRES OXFORD ST HELENS



The Oxford St Helens in February 2006

George Prince of Bootle has completed negotiations for the acquisition of the Oxford Duke Street, St Helens, one of the theatres controlled by Messrs James and Walter Rylance. He will take over the Oxford, which accommodates about 700 persons, towards the end of this month (August) and intends to carry out a scheme of redecorations. Mr Prince is associated with the Imperial and Palace Kinemas, Bootle; the Scala and Palladium, St Helens; the Queen's, Ellesmere Port; the Glynn, Wrexham and the Coliseum Wallasey.

"I am on the lookout for further Kinemas seating up to 1,000 persons, situated within fifty miles of Liverpool," Mr Prince told the Kiné representative. Mr Prince is one of the pioneers of the Merseyside Kinema Trade and provided the first Kinema in Bootle at the Sun Hall (now the Imperial). He has been in the trade for the last thirty-seven years. Mrs Prince actively assists her husband in the business, particularly in the selection of the programmes.

*Kiné Weekly* – 8 August 1935

### ODEON TAKE OVER LLANDUDNO HALL

The Winter Gardens Llandudno, has been taken over by Odeon (Llandudno) Ltd. A percentage of the new shares is held by local people. It is expected that structural alterations will be made to the exterior of the building in order to conform to the usual general design of the Odeon Co. The new manager is Bernard Cheetham, a native of Rhyl. His father was the proprietor of the first Kinema in North Wales and built the Cosy Cinema Colwyn Bay.

Note: His father was Arthur Cheetham – see p7 last Bulletin.

*Kiné Weekly* – 12 November 1936

### CINEMA TRANSFORMATION

Burnley's oldest picture house, for years known as Andrews Cinema will re-open next Monday as the Roxy. It has been leased to Mr Harry Buxton, proprietor of several halls in East Lancashire, who in giving the hall a new name, expects also to give it a new lease of life. While the hall has been closed, extensive alterations have been carried out. It has been re-seated and re-carpeted and a modern decorative scheme has further helped to brighten the interior and new sound equipment has been installed. The exterior has not been forgotten and a neon lighting installation will brighten up a district, which, until now, has been rather dismal at night time. The expense has been considerable but Mr Buxton feels sure he is going to be repaid. He is one of the outstanding personalities in the film world, known to colleagues in the business as 'The man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo,' because of an unusual run of luck there a few years ago. He has put the fortune which he won there into entertainment and his aptitude for sensing the public demand has brought him further reward.

*Express and News* – 23 December 1938

## Isle of Man

STRAND CINEMA DOUGLAS



The Strand Douglas in July 2011 – photo by David Simpson

The Strand Cinema, Douglas in the Isle of Man, which just opened, is under the management of Mr HB Wincok (late manager of the Grand). There is seating accommodation for 1,200; the green carpet, red plush tip ups and hanging curtains giving it a very cosy appearance. Wide handsome staircases, richly carpeted in red, lead the way to a comfortable balcony and leading off is a luxurious café and lounge. The building is beautifully furnished, the lighting arrangements (which are on the 'dimmer system') leave nothing to be desired, the bowls containing the lights being most artistic. The performance is continuous from three o'clock in the afternoon with an extra show at eleven in the morning should the weather be wet. The pictures are shown by two Powers No 6 projectors on to a screen 18 by 14 [ft] and the operating box is most roomy. Barker's all British masterpiece *East Lynne* was the opening film and, being excellently shown, was responsible for packed houses on the first day. Last week *The Mothering Heart* topped the bill with success.

*Kiné Weekly* – 21 August 1913

### OVERCROWDING OFFENCE AT MANX CINEMA.

The Strand Cinema Theatre Co Ltd, proprietors of the Picture House and the Strand Cinemas, Douglas, were last week fined for overcrowding those Kinemas. The magistrate said a heavy penalty was provided for this offence, namely a fine of £50 but he felt that the cases had been brought as a warning and that a fine of £2 on each summons would be sufficient. John Brew, for Douglas Corporation said he visited the Picture House at 8:25 on the evening of 4 August. On the left-hand staircase leading to the balcony lounge he counted 128 persons sitting or standing on the stairs. He visited the Strand cinema at 8:10 on the same evening and counted 17 persons standing at the back of the pit and 14 at the back of the balcony. Bruce Macpherson, barrister, defending, said the company much regretted that this should have occurred but it was the busiest time of the season and the inspection was made at approximately the time of the changeover between the first and second houses. The manager was anxious to avoid a long and cumbersome queue in the street and admitted as many as he thought could be accommodated at the second house. GD Ashton, prosecuting said the corporation took a serious view of the matter. The obstruction was not small but substantial and might possibly have been a fatal one if there had been a fire.

*Kiné Weekly* – 9 September 1937

### CALL-UP AFFECTS ISLE OF MAN HALLS.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the Strand Cinema Theatre Co Ltd, one of the leading Manx circuits, the chairman FP Kearsley said it was regrettable that the calling of operators was not deferred in the Isle of Man as it was on the mainland. They were working the operating boxes with skeleton staffs, as they had been unable to replace those who had joined up. If these staffs were further depleted, it might be impossible to keep all the theatres open.

*Kiné Weekly* – 6 May 1943



# CTA ARCHIVE

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

## UNIDENTIFIED PHOTOS

We are presently digitising the photographs in the Archive for London and have arrived at the Trocadero Elephant and Castle. Maurice Cheepin, who is well known for his publicity stunts, was manager here for a while and consequently there are a number of publicity photographs from the Maurice Cheepin Collection stored in the Trocadero files, featuring stunts to promote films or guest appearances. Below are two examples where we are struggling to identify the film stars as they are not looking at the camera. If you can identify either the man holding the girl or the lady signing the autograph please let me know by emailing [archive@cta-uk.org](mailto:archive@cta-uk.org).



## 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](https://twitter.com/CTA_Archive).

## MAKING AN ENQUIRY OR ARRANGING A VISIT

Please visit the new Archive website for full details or to make an enquiry: [cta-uk.org/archive](http://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.

## DONATING MATERIAL TO THE ARCHIVE

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

## VOLUNTEERING AT THE ARCHIVE OR FROM HOME

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

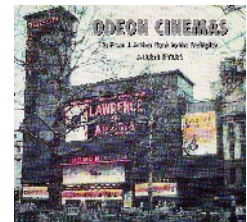
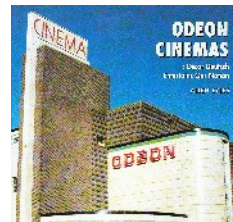
## CONTACTING THE ARCHIVE

To make an enquiry please use the enquiry form on the website. For any other matter, such as donations or volunteering, please email [archive@cta-uk.org](mailto:archive@cta-uk.org); if you do not have Internet access call 07971 752807.

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist

## All you need to know about... ODEON

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



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Please add £3.40 to your order for postage.

Available from the Sales Officer – address on p8.



# OBITUARIES

**KEITH SKONE 22 NOVEMBER 1943 – 4 OCTOBER 2022**



Keith Skone was an early member of the Cinema Theatre Association and by 1974 had become a very active chairman of the society and also for a while its archivist, helping build up the collection of photographs and cinema memorabilia – he organised talks, most memorably with cinema magnate Phil Hyams – and worked on photo lists – copying collections of photographs and making them available to the membership. And he researched the history of cinemas from the earliest days in great detail. All this in his spare time while his job as a technician at the Tate Gallery involved some projection of films.

He also researched and published through the CTA in 1980 a booklet listing all the operating cinemas in the UK with details of seating capacities and technical information about their projectors and sound equipment.

I was a writer and editor working on film books in the publishing industry and was keen to compile a history of London's West End Cinemas. As Keith had done much of the groundwork already, particularly on the pre-World War One period, it seemed sensible to join forces – I wrote the text and designed the book and Keith became the actual publisher of the first edition of *London's West End Cinemas* in 1984, devising the name Premier Bioscope and doing the essential job of selling the book to CTA members, bookshops and through the post. This collaboration worked out so well that we produced *The Cinemas of Hertfordshire* the following year (1985) and then *The Cinemas of Croydon* in 1989.

The Croydon book was published through a new partnership called Keytone – (not Keystone) – which was a business collaboration between Keith and Tony Moss that went on to produce a second enlarged edition of *London's West End Cinemas* in 1991 and a book in 1994 by Tony Moss on two sister cinema organists – *Bagatelle – Queens of the Keyboard*.

Having been a vital force for a while in the CTA, Keith withdrew from a prominent role but remained a member. Both he and I moved out of London and I saw him rarely.

I do remember two occasions. I walked onto a platform at Waterloo Station late one evening to take a train to Clapham Junction and a voice called out – it was Keith in the guard's cab and he invited me to ride with him – a breach of the rules that enabled a brief chat.

Later I was writing a monthly series of visits to cinemas and interviewing their managers and when I covered the Screens at Winchester in 2006 there was Keith in the projection box, where he stored his cinema records.

Thank you, Keith – it was always a pleasure to work with you.

Allen Eyles  
photo courtesy Lee Skone

**PAUL KIRNER 74**



A former CTA member, Paul was a well-established theatre organist and entertainer. He began his musical career in 1964 and, after studying with Ena Baga and Charles Smart, spent many years entertaining at clubs, seaside revues and theatres and led his own trio in the 1970s and 80s. In 1979 Paul opened an entertainment venue at Sapcote in Leicestershire, centred around the Compton organ from the Odeon Wealdstone, which was enlarged over the next 40 years, including the addition of the 4-manual console from the Ritz Belfast. In 2012, he acquired a disused chapel near Porth, South Wales and opened it as the Music Palace, with the aim of acquiring, preserving and presenting cinema organs, both electronic and pipe and cinema memorabilia. The Centre houses the Christie organ from the Regal Edmonton, together with several other instruments in various states of restoration and the Centre will continue its work following Paul's death. Paul also owned the ex-Gaumont, Manchester Wurlitzer, which is housed in Folly Farm Adventure Park near Kilgetty in Pembrokeshire. He was a member for over ten years and played for the CTA in 2012 on the Wurlitzer installed in the home of Dorian Collins at Worcester during a weekend tour of the area.

Jeremy Buck

**DENYS CHAMBERLAIN 96**

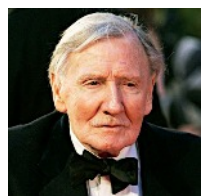
I have received notice today [11 December] that, sadly, Denys Chamberlain has passed away. Denys, as you will probably know, owned and operated various cinemas in the Bristol area. These included the Gaiety at Knowle, which I had the privilege of managing for him. He was a gentle gentleman of the industry and I thought very highly of him.

Chris Bird

## NECROLOGY

**LESLIE PHILIPS CBE 98**

In a career spanning more than eight decades, he starred in more than 200 films, TV and radio shows. Famed for his portrayal of upper-class gents, his suggestive catchphrases included "ding dong" and "well, hellooo". He appeared in four *Carry On* films and *The Smallest Show on Earth* (1957) as well as many others.



**SIR SYDNEY SAMUELSON CBE 97**

Sydney started his career as a rewind boy at the Luxor in Lancing. After serving in the RAF he became a film cameraman and later set up a film equipment hire service. He became the first British Film Commissioner and was a fellow of BAFTA and the BKSTS and president of the PPT.



**RUTH MADOC 79**

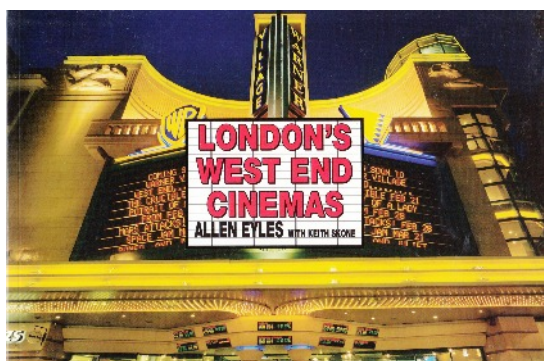
Probably best known for playing Yellowcoat Gladys Pugh in all 58 episodes of the TV series *Hi-de-Hi!* On the big screen she had small parts in *Under Milk Wood* (1971), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1971) and *The Prince and the Pauper* (1977).





## 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 p8

## INTERNET CORNER

- ★ [tinyurl.com/spec-every](http://tinyurl.com/spec-every) A reporter from *The Spectator* describes a bad experience at the Everyman King's Cross. {56781}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/ilk-ritz](http://tinyurl.com/ilk-ritz) From *Derbyshire Live*: Urban Explorers' photos inside the abandoned Ritz at Ilkeston. {22173}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/bham-royalty](http://tinyurl.com/bham-royalty) From *Birmingham Live*: Inside the Grade II listed but fire-damaged former Royalty Harborne. {33866}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/sot-vic](http://tinyurl.com/sot-vic) From *Stoke-on-Trent Live*: A look back at the Victoria in Hartshill. {41469} *above four items sent in by Terry Hanstock*
- ★ [tinyurl.com/mcr-odeon-dem](http://tinyurl.com/mcr-odeon-dem) From the *Manchester Evening News*: photos of the demolition of the Paramount/Odeon in Manchester's Oxford Road. {2430} *sent in by Terry Rourke*
- ★ [www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHiuKzgao08](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHiuKzgao08) A 12¼ minute video from Neil Sean: the history of the Coronet Holloway (North London) now a Wetherspoons pub, which is up for sale; see newsreel p22. {4301}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/arb-roath-palace](http://tinyurl.com/arb-roath-palace) From *The Courier* – the Palace cinema Arbroath from beginning to end. 6 photos. {26375}
- ★ [tinyurl.com/derby-scace](http://tinyurl.com/derby-scace) From *Derbyshire Live* – Urban Explorers have been inside the abandoned eleven-screen Showcase at Foresters Park in Derby. It is due to be demolished for a car dealership. {21129}

**PICTURE HOUSE**  
MAGAZINE OF THE CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

It is regretted that the 2022 edition of *Picture House* has been delayed by numerous factors but should be posted out to members by the end of January.

Offers of material for the 2023 edition are now welcome.

Allen Eyles

## MEMBERSHIP

### NEW MEMBERS

We offer a warm welcome to the following new members: Alejandro Whyatt, Mark Cutmore, Joanne Howe, Richard Bench, Christopher Longstaff and Jeff Adams.

### DONATIONS

Once more members have displayed their generosity by adding a donation to the renewal of their subscriptions. Our sincere thanks go to: MA Bentley, DC Bishop, LS Bull, MS Crowle, R Duerden, DW Faircloth, PJ Goff, VF Harvey, DM Howarth, PD Jennings, AI Mantell, MJ Mantell, KC McFarlane, AJ North, HW Patching, JM Pritchard, FRA Rosen, JG Rumble, RJR Shaw, RD Simpson, SD Simpson, KM Wakefield, WE Watters and MW Weston.

Ray Ritmeester, Membership Secretary

## HOLIDAY SNAPS

**PLAZA SUPER SOUND CINEMA 1937-1950S /**  
**NEW PLAZA CINEMA 1950S – 1965 HAY-ON-WYE (Powys)**



Following our need to declutter, I recently took a trip to Hay-on-Wye and where better than to visit the Hay-on-Wye Cinema bookshop which is housed in the former Plaza cinema, a small 220-seater that closed in 1965. Once inside, conversation with the manager turned to cinema and the building itself and its fascinating history and he was keen to show me around. The projection box is full of books from floor to ceiling but removing several books reveals the original projection port. Also, the proscenium and star-decorated ceiling are still evident. When pointed out, the frieze above the front door depicts cinema film giving an indication of it's past. It is well worth a visit even just to browse. {30619}

Alan Hodson



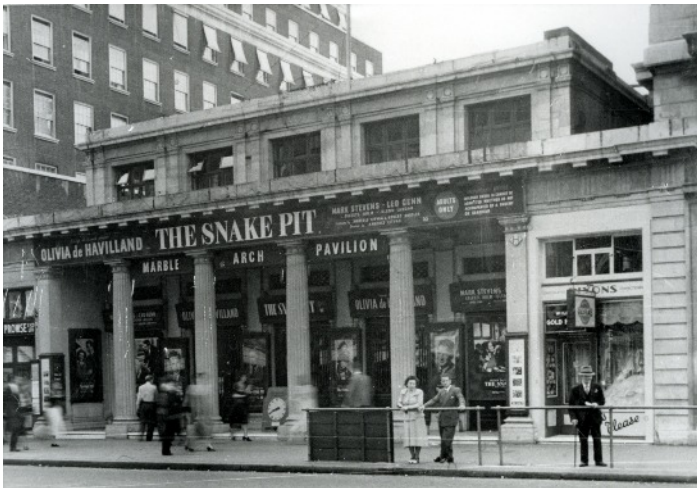
# ROYALTY GOES TO THE PICTURES

By David Evans



King George V and Queen Mary

In November, 1924 the fact that King George V and Queen Mary had been to the Marble Arch Pavilion in London to attend a public film performance was considered so newsworthy that even foreign newspapers such as the *New York Times* commented on the event. The film in question was *Zebrugge*, a recreation of the Royal Navy raid on the German base at the Bruges Canal, Belgium on 23 April 1918. Whether King George's father, Edward VII, had ever visited a cinema is not really known but by 1914 the Central Picture Theatre on Central Drive in Blackpool had become the King Edward Picture Palace in honour of the late monarch.



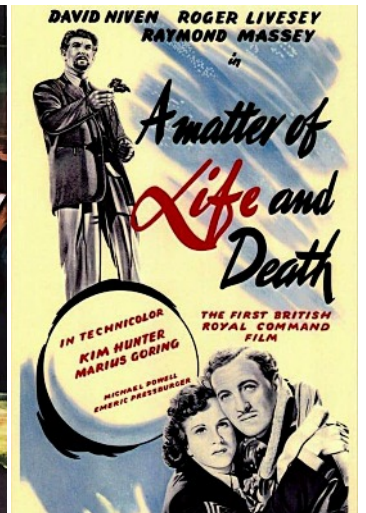
The Marble Arch Pavilion in 1948 – photo courtesy Dusashenka

As a widow Queen Mary enjoyed many visits to theatres and cinemas with, perhaps, the best known of these being her attendance at the Royal Première of *The Wicked Lady*, starring Margaret Lockwood in the title role, in November, 1945. This took place at the Gaumont Haymarket and had been preceded by some concern about the Queen's reaction to what was considered to be a slightly risqué picture. However, as Allen Eyles and Keith Skone confirm in their invaluable *London's West End Cinemas*, she told J Arthur Rank that she enjoyed the picture – unlike the American Censor, the Breen Office, which listed objections to some of the film's content before US release. These mainly concerned some of the actresses' décolletage and lines such as "we must be together, just once, tonight". Perhaps Her Majesty's eyelids were drooping when this sort of thing turned up on the screen.



The Regal/Odeon Marble Arch in 1965 – photo courtesy Dusashenka

There was no such American fuss about Powell and Pressburger's *A Matter of Life and Death*, apart from the title, which might have been considered too downbeat for US audiences, who saw it as *Stairway to Heaven*. The film was chosen for the very first Royal Film Performance in 1946 – an annual event for the benefit of the Cinematograph Trade Benevolent Fund. This took place at the Regal Marble Arch, a venue chosen as it possessed a lift, thought necessary to assist King George VI who had a mobility problem. Earlier, on 8 April 1942, the King, Queen and Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret visited Denham Studios to see some of the filming of Noel Coward and David Lean's *In Which We Serve*. In his diary Coward noted that they were "perfectly charming, easy and interested" and that the Princesses, in particular, were "thrilled and perfectly behaved".



By 1950 a film, *The Mudlark*, featuring a portrayal of the King's great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, was chosen for the Royal Film Performance, although the Queen was played by an American actress, Irene Dunne and not a British one. This took place at the Empire Leicester Square described by MGM as "the Showplace of the Nation" but, on this occasion, the film was from another studio, 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Fox. However, the 1954 Royal Film Performance at the Empire, MGM's *Beau Brummell*, which again featured a member of the historic Royal Family did not escape criticism when its selection as the Royal film was announced, due to the fact that it featured a very British Robert Morley as King George III during his periods of mental incapacity. This was the second time that Morley had played a reigning monarch in a major feature film, the first being his Louis XVI in MGM's lavish *Marie Antoinette* of 1938. Whether Queen Elizabeth II objected to the former representation of her great, great, great, great grandfather is not recorded and, of course, much fuller cinematic and televisual royal "revelations" were to follow later in the twentieth and into the twenty-first-centuries. Whether Her late Majesty objected to these is not recorded either...