



CINEMA
THEATRE
ASSOCIATION

www.cta-uk.org

BULLETIN

Vol 57 No 1 ISSN 1479-0882

January – March 2023



The Ritz Rushden (Northants) where bingo has closed; photo taken February 2004



The Adelphi in Attercliffe [Sheffield] which has been bought by the Council and will be renovated; 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 p11.

Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor



Quick Guide to CTA Social Media



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www.instagram.com/cinematheatreorguk



www.ticketsource.co.uk



Zoom talks and presentations platform

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visits@cta-uk.org : enquires about talks/events bookings
info@cta-uk.org : general enquires
Amazon Smile link : smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1100702-0
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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Registered address: 59 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, TW11 0DJ.
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MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Ray Ritmeester subs@cta-uk.org
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Items for possible inclusion in the Bulletin should be sent to
BULLETIN EDITOR: Harry Rigby bulletin@cta-uk.org
65 Tennyson Avenue, Harrogate, North Yorks, HG1 3LE

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: David Trevor-Jones + chairman@cta-uk.org
47 The Street, Old Basing, Basingstoke, RG24 7BX
VICE-CHAIRMAN: Ian Meyrick +
11 Tarrant Avenue, Witney, OX28 1EE
SECRETARY: Adam Unger + honsec@cta-uk.org
59 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, TW11 0DJ
TREASURER: Neville C Taylor + accounts@cta-uk.org
Flat One, 128 Gloucester Terrace, London, W2 6HP
CASEWORK COMMITTEE – Chairman: Richard Gray + casework@cta-uk.org
45 Arnold Road, Bow, London, E3 4NU
Members: as main committee plus Rob Chesterfield, Jane Jephcote,
Peter Lea, Mark Price, Vicky Simon & Peter Wyldie
ARCHIVIST: Clive Polden archive@cta-uk.org
14 Ivychurch Gardens, Cliftonville, Margate, CT9 3YG
ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST: David Simpson
PUBLIC RELATIONS: vacancy publicity@cta-uk.org
SALES OFFICER: Jeremy Buck + sales@cta-uk.org
34 Pelham Road, London, N22 6LN
WEBMASTER: Gary Painter web@cta-uk.org
VISITS CO-ORDINATOR: Ray Ritmeester visits@cta-uk.org
66 Woodside Road, High Wycombe, HP13 7JB
PICTURE HOUSE EDITOR: Allen Eyles picture.house@cta-uk.org
13 Tennyson Court, Paddockhall Road, Haywards Heath, RH16 1EZ
CTA SCOTLAND: Gordon Barr, Gary Painter scotland@cta-uk.org
11 Merker Terrace, Linlithgow, EH49 6DD
CTA CYMRU/WALES: John Skinner, Jon Williams wales@cta-uk.org
3 Swan Lane, Ystalyfera, Swansea, SA9 2JB
CTA NORTH: vacancy north@cta-uk.org
CTA WESSEX: David Eve, Gary Trinder wessex@cta-uk.org
Far Ends, 28 Courtenay Road, Lower Parkstone, Poole, BH14 0HD
COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Emma Beeston, Kevin Gooding, Rachel Marks,
Richard Norman, Tim McCullen, Ken Roe.
Please use info@cta-uk.org if uncertain as to whom to address an e-mail
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does not necessarily imply that it reflects the views of the
Cinema Theatre Association, its Committee or its Bulletin Editor.
It is assumed that submissions are for publication, unless stated otherwise;
items may be shortened or edited at the discretion of the Editor.
Please state if you require items to be returned and enclose SAE,
otherwise everything will be passed on to the CTA Archive.
VISITS: Members and non-members are reminded that they attend visits
entirely at their own risk and no responsibility can be accepted by the
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Typeset in Franklin Gothic Book by Harry Rigby
Printed by The Ludo Press Ltd, 18 Wimbledon Stadium Business Centre,
Riverside Road, London, SW17 0BA www.ludo.co.uk

VISITS AND EVENTS

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 p4) 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

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. Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre' into their Search Box.

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

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.

More Casework in the Full Bulletin

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
- No 30 – £5.00
- No 31 – £7.50
- Nos 32, 33, 34, 35 – £5.00 each
- No 36 – £6.00
- Nos 37, 45 – £8.50
- Nos 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46 – £6.00 each

For details of contents, see Bulletin 56/6, or online at www.cta-uk.org/publishing/picture-house

There are also available a few second-hand copies of out-of-print issues of *Picture House* 9, 10, 14/15, 20 & 23, priced £5.00 each, plus postage. A list of their contents was printed on p4 of Bulletin 52/2 or can be obtained by SAE or email from the Sales Officer or Bulletin Editor.

BULLETINS

We can supply back numbers of most Bulletins from Volume 21 (1987) to date. Prices for issues from 1987 to 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.



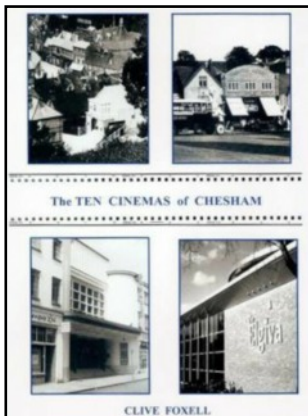
Price: £6.00 per binder, supplied in a special postal carton. Please add £3.40 to your total order for post and packing. Ordering details opposite.

New Publication

The Ten Cinema 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.



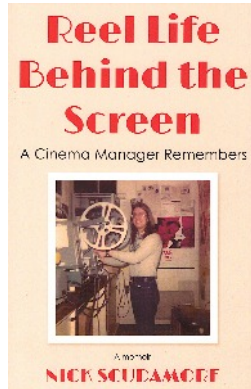
Ordering

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

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 £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 £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 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.



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.

MAKING AN ENQUIRY OR ARRANGING A VISIT

Please visit the new Archive website for full details or to make an enquiry: cta-uk.org/archive. The *Exploring the Archive* page of the website includes catalogues and lists for various collections along with indexes for periodicals including the Bulletin and Picture House. You may find these lists useful in identifying material for research. As the catalogues can only provide a brief snapshot of a small part of the Archive, please use the enquiry form that can be found on the *Making an Enquiry* page to tell us about a project you are undertaking or subject which you are interested in researching – or maybe it's a photograph that eludes you. Visiting the Archive is not normally necessary and material can simply be sent to you.

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.

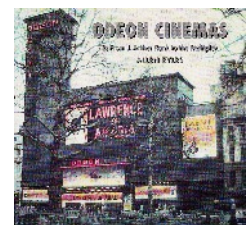
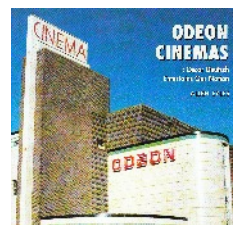
CONTACTING THE ARCHIVE

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; 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.



Now at reduced prices!

ODEON 1 – Oscar Deutsch Entertains Our Nation – £15.00

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

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

Also available – THE GRANADA THEATRES – £18.99.

Last few copies!

Please add £3.40 to your order for postage.

Available from the Sales Officer – address on p4.

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



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



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.

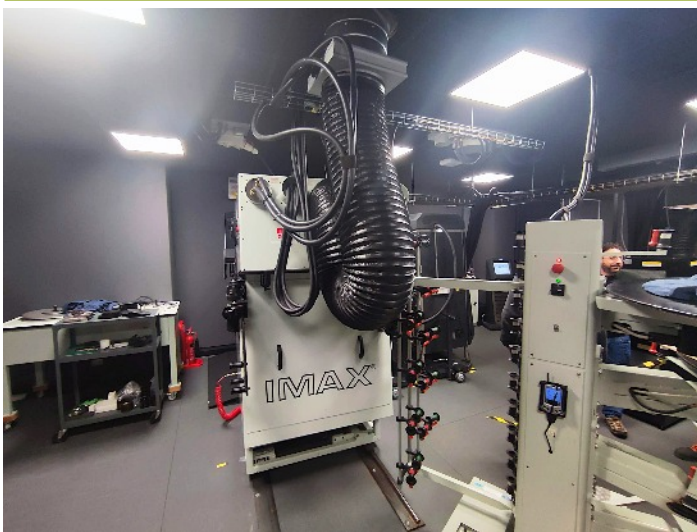


The staircase at the Ciné Lumière [1]

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.



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
 Movie Theaters Designed by Stefanie Fischer:
cinematreasures.org/architects/1069
 IMAX at the Science Museum Ronson Theatre:
www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/imax-cinema

Photos by [1] Kevin Gooding; [2] The author; [3] Bruce C.

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

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

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

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 – sent in by Richard Lysons

NEWSREEL

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

Allen has also added comments, where indicated.

Photos by Harry Rigby within entry, except where stated.

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

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}

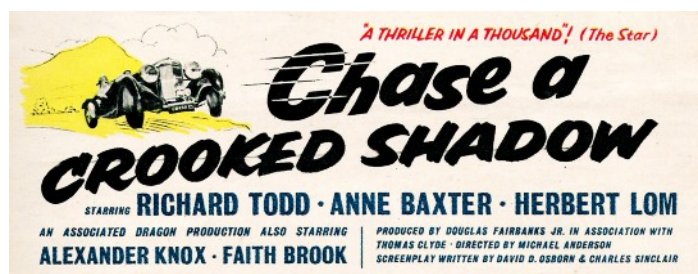
Burnley Express – 5 December

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 120th 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

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

**Four more pages of newsreel
in the full Bulletin**

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:

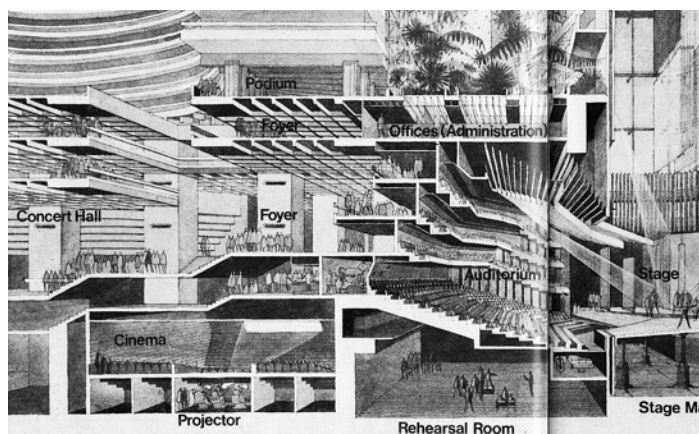
tinyurl.com/sheff-class-doors.

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

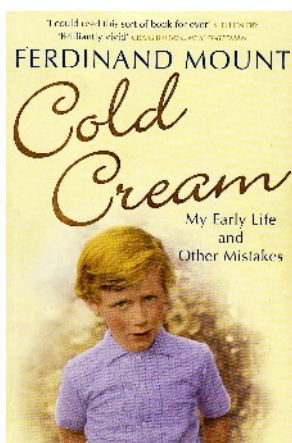
Members may have seen the recent film *The Lost King* about Richard III. The story was that he was killed at the Battle of Bosworth, his body was taken to Leicester and thrown in the River Soar there. A plaque used to be on the West Bridge in Leicester stating this. However, a lady (Philipa) was not 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

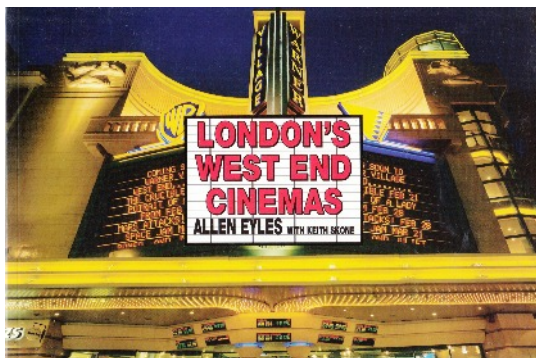
A member, David Barker, has picked up a typographical error in the Heritage Casework section of the last Bulletin. It is in the Plaza/Odeon Gloucester section, stating that it is in 'Conversation Area' rather than a 'Conservation Area'. I'm afraid predictive text has had its way here.

Richard Gray

More Letters in the full Bulletin

London's West End Cinemas

by Allen Eyles with Keith Skone.



The history of London's West End cinemas dates back more than one hundred years. This book details all of them, in chronological order, totalling well over one hundred, from 1906 up to 2013. The best of the West End's cinemas were outfitted to a very high standard to match their role as showcases for new films, hosting press shows and premières, as well as being a magnet for film enthusiasts anxious to see films on exclusive première runs. Even now, when films are available everywhere at the same time, the West End's cinemas are a vibrant attraction to visitors from all over the world as well as for Londoners having a night on the town. There are interior views as well as exteriors of most of the cinemas and over 50 illustrations are in full colour, together with appendices of club cinemas and theatres used as temporary cinemas.

Large Format paperback, 210 pages, over 400 illustrations, £25.00 plus £3.40 postage, from the Sales Officer.

Published in 2013 in conjunction with English Heritage.

Ordering details on p4



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)

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

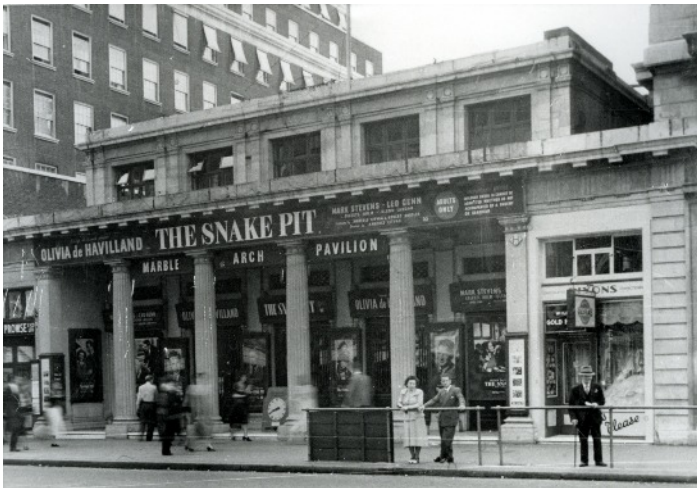
ROYALTY GOES TO THE PICTURES

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.



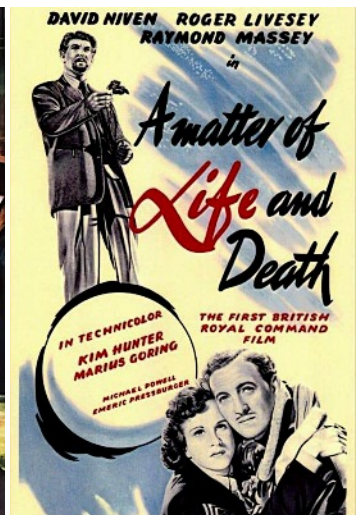
The Marble Arch Pavilion in 1948 – photo courtesy Dusashenka

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, 20th 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...