



CINEMA  
THEATRE  
ASSOCIATION

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

# BULLETIN

Vol 57 No 2 ISSN 1479-0882

April – June 2023



The CTA group visiting the former Green's Playhouse in Ayr, where bingo closed on 26 February; photo taken July 2009



The former Savoy / Essoldo in Hayes (Middlesex) where bingo also closed on 26 February; photo taken April 2006



## FROM YOUR EDITOR

I much appreciated the dozens of messages and emails thanking me for doing the Bulletin for almost 25 years. I'm sorry I haven't been able to reply to them all personally but I thank you all. In a way, I am sorry to have to give up but times move on. Please take note of the details listed opposite here and in the Newsreel section. It is much preferred if you can send things electronically but, if you are unable to do so, there are postal addresses available. Please note the deadline for the next edition, given at the bottom of this column; it has been made very early in case of problems.

Please do not send anything further to my Harrogate postal address or to my private email address. Anything I do get in the transition period before you read this will, of course, be passed on to the appropriate person. It's still not too late to volunteer as a new Bulletin Editor!

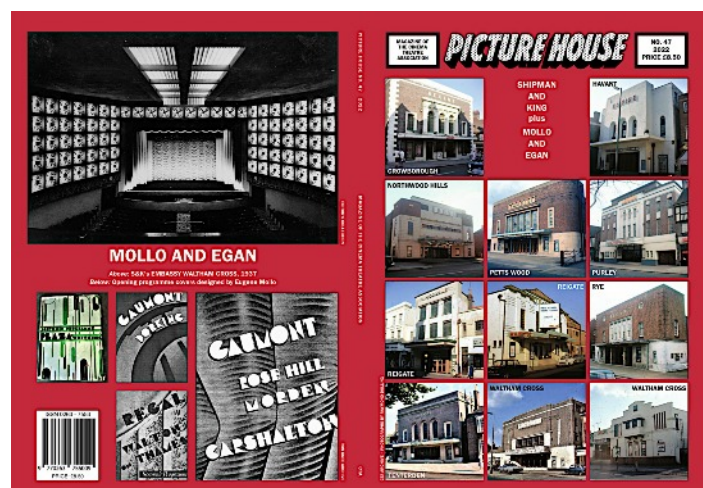
The sad news in this edition is that at least seven bingo halls closed on the same day in February – five of them were in former cinemas: Ayr, Chester, Hastings, Hayes and Hull. You can read the individual reports in the Newsreel but I thought it was appropriate to put two of them on the front cover. They were all fairly large former cinemas. I wonder what will happen to the buildings now? Three weeks later Buzz Bingo announced that nine of their clubs were to close – three of those are in former cinemas, Dumfries, Keighley and Slough.

Finally, a heartfelt 'goodbye' and best wishes.

*Harry Rigby, CTA Bulletin Editor*

## Picture House

The latest 96-page issue of *Picture House* has been finished and printing is due for completion at the end of March, after which it will be posted out as usual.



## Quick Guide to CTA Social Media

-  [www.cta-uk.org](http://www.cta-uk.org)
-  [www.facebook.com/cinematheatreorguk](https://www.facebook.com/cinematheatreorguk)
-  [www.twitter.com/Ctheatreassoc](https://www.twitter.com/Ctheatreassoc)
-  [www.instagram.com/cinematheatreorguk](https://www.instagram.com/cinematheatreorguk)
-  [www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk)
-  Zoom talks and presentations platform

### Useful CTA Contacts

- [digital@cta-uk.org](mailto:digital@cta-uk.org) : enquires about digital services
- [visits@cta-uk.org](mailto:visits@cta-uk.org) : enquires about talks/events bookings
- [info@cta-uk.org](mailto:info@cta-uk.org) : general enquires
- Visits' registration phone hotline: 020 8800 8393

**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE**  
**WEDNESDAY 24 MAY**

## CINEMA THEATRE ASSOCIATION

(Founded January 1967)

promoting serious interest in all aspects of  
cinema buildings

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Articles and letters for possible inclusion in the Bulletin  
can be sent to [elain.harwood@me.com](mailto:elain.harwood@me.com);  
if unable to email, manuscripts can be posted to  
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For what to do with Newsreel items, please see p8.

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

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**BULLETIN:** Members are invited to submit items for possible publication to  
[bulletin@cta-uk.org](mailto:bulletin@cta-uk.org). However, it is stressed that the publication of an item  
does not necessarily imply that it reflects the views of the  
Cinema Theatre Association or its Committee.

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

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

**PRODUCTS:** The Cinema Theatre Association does not necessarily  
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Riverside Road, London, SW17 0BA [www.ludo.co.uk](http://www.ludo.co.uk)

## VISITS AND EVENTS

### CTA Annual General Meeting

Saturday 27 May at 11am (doors open 10:30am)

**ActOne Cinema, 119 High Street, Acton, London, W3 6NA**

**ORGANISED BY KEN ROE**

The AGM of the Cinema Theatre Association will be held in the ActOne Cinema, Acton in the west of London. All members are invited to attend; admission is free. Nominations for committee members are invited and should be sent to CTA Secretary Adam Unger (address on page 2 of this Bulletin) to arrive seven days before the meeting. The minutes of last year's AGM will be available in the members area on the CTA website from 1 May and will also be available on the day.



The ActOne cinema – photo by Ken Roe, March 2023

### International Talks at The Gallery

Members may flashback to the January/February 2020 edition of the CTA Bulletin when we announced the first two of a planned series of talks by international guest speakers. Sadly, the Covid-19 pandemic closed us down in March and that talk never took place. Three years later, we are set to resume our International talks...

#### Abandoned Cinemas of the World

An illustrated talk by Simon Edelstein,  
assisted by Elisabeth Christeler

Friday 9 June; The Gallery, 6:30pm (doors open 6pm)

**ORGANISED BY KEN ROE**

The CTA has great pleasure to welcome fellow long-time CTA Members Simon Edelstein & Elisabeth Christeler from Geneva, Switzerland as our international guest speakers.

#### SORRY! House Full

A retrospective Review of the Cinemas of Sydney

An illustrated talk by Ian Hanson

Friday 11 August; The Gallery, 6:30pm (doors open 6pm)

**ORGANISED BY KEN ROE**

From Sydney, New South Wales, Australia we are honoured to welcome fellow CTA member Ian Hanson as our international guest speaker.

#### BOOKING YOUR TICKET FOR THE TALK

CTA talks are open to everyone – members and non-members alike. Admission £10 per person, including a glass of wine or soft drink and nibbles. Booking is done on-line using TicketSource:

[www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk). Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre Association'

into their Search Box and book for 'Abandoned Cinemas of the World'. For members who are unable to book online, please call the CTA Visits ansaphone line 0208 800 8393 stating your name and membership number, how many tickets are required and which presentation you wish to book.

You will be registered to attend and be able to pay (cash only) on the door. Please book early to secure your place.



## 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.*

### England

#### Grade II\*

**STATE GRAYS (1938, Francis Chancellor)**

The deterioration of the State cinema's roof continues after Thurrock Council's commissioners and auditors say that due to bankruptcy money can only be spent on essential Council requirements. Following our pressure, Historic England will support Thurrock Council in issuing an Urgent Works Notice. A new, undisclosed buyer has purchased the building from Wetherspoons.

**GRANADA WALTHAMSTOW, LONDON**

**(1930, Cecil Masey and Theodore Komisarjevsky)**

The Waltham Forest Conservation Officer has sent us images of the proposed decorative scheme. We believe this, tabled by the Waltham Forest Conservation Officer, is not ideal but at least it conserves the original paint layers. We had already commented on the new colour scheme proposed for the foyer.

#### Grade II

**REGAL KINGSTON, LONDON (1932, Robert Cromie)**



We attended a site visit along with the Conservation officer for Kingston Council. Panter Hudspith, architects for owner CNM Estates have produced proposals for a shared auditorium space, which are an improvement on previous ones. *Photo taken April 2006.*

**PYRAMID SALE, MANCHESTER (1934, Drury and Gomersall)**



The owner is renovating the front façade and the foyer block, having taken on board our recommendations on the redecoration scheme for the façade. *Photo taken January 2006.*

**More Casework in the full Bulletin**



# CTA ZOOM TALKS

## A Virtual Stroll Down Hollywood Boulevard

Saturday 20 May at 5:30pm (BST) / 9:30am (US PDT)  
(Zoom talk no 22)

Join us together with the Los Angeles Historic Theatre Foundation (LAHTF) for another of their exciting and popular annual webinar collaborations. This year's talk will focus on 'A virtual stroll down Hollywood Boulevard'. We will explore the theatres that are hiding in plain sight, the ones that have stood against earthquakes and those that continue to set the bar for the audience experience. The ever-changing popularity of Hollywood, both as a geographical location and the entertainment industry, could have easily diminished the National Register district but has maintained its importance through the decades.

Major technological advancements over the last hundred years have challenged these theatres to find ways of maintaining or even bringing the audiences back. As the home of motion pictures and entertainment, Hollywood has had the creative licence to lead the way from bringing us the first red-carpet movie premiere as we know it today to converting a nearly 90-year-old cinema into the world's largest IMAX theatre. The boulevard has seen it all; vaudeville and nickelodeons, legitimate powerhouses and movie palaces. You won't want to miss this informative and image-packed virtual stroll through the evolution of the iconic Hollywood Boulevard. We look forward to you joining us; see on-line booking below.

**Queries:** please email [visits@cta-uk.org](mailto:visits@cta-uk.org)

*Photos copyright: Historic Theatre Photos / Mike Hume*

### BOOKING YOUR TICKET

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

Zoom talk starts at 5:30pm BST / 9:30am US PDT  
(log-in from 10 minutes before start time)

Booking is done on-line using TicketSource:  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk)

Simply enter 'Cinema Theatre Association' into their Search Box. (Talk No 22)



The TCL Chinese Theatre forecourt in 2017



The Fonda Theatre auditorium in 2019



The Hollywood Pantages Theatre auditorium in 2018



# PUBLICATIONS

## Back Numbers Available

### PICTURE HOUSE MAGAZINE

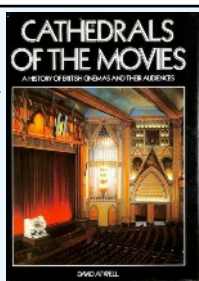
Listed below are the back numbers of *Picture House* that are still available:

No 6	£1.50	Television in the Cinema; Atherley Southampton; Hippodrome, Blackpool.
No 8	£1.50	Sol Levy; Reginald Cooper; ABC in NW London.
No 16	£3.00	Dominion London; 3,000 plus; John Broadley remembers.
No 17	£3.00	Special Issue featuring the Cinemas of George Coles with 26 original photographs reproduced in sepia.
No 18	£3.00	Sydney Colwyn Foulkes; United Picture Theatres; Tivoli Wimborne.
No 19	£3.50	Co-operative Cinemas; Ideal Lambeth; Dursley; Alister Macdonald; Granada Tooting.
No 21	£3.50	100 Years On; Travelling Shows; Reggie Rea; Albert Hall Sheffield; Regal Wells; West End Adverts; Scotland.
all issues below have colour cover and inside pages		
No 22	£3.50	Burrell, Foley, Fischer; Palace Theatre London; David Nye.
No 24	£4.50	Oldest Cinema - Harringay; Cardiff Round-up; Odeon Miscellany.
No 25	£4.50	Oldest Cinema (Brighton); FE Bromige; Committee's Choice; Gaumont Managers; Carlton Swansea;.
No 26	£4.50	Paramount Newcastle; Edward Stone; Granada Men; E de Wilde Holding; Electric Portobello Road.
No 27	£4.50	New Victoria/Apollo; Whiteladies Bristol; Clark & Fenn; Compton Organs; Tim Foster Associates.
No 28	£4.50	James McKissack; WJ King; Torbay Cinema; Tabs.
No 29	£4.50	Cinerama in Britain; Braziers the Builders; John Fernée; Waller Jeffs; John Duffin's paintings.
No 30	£5.00	The Davis Family, Croydon; Apollo Hammersmith Organ; Norwich Roadshows.
No 31	£7.50	Special 84-page edition: Essoldo - A Family Business: Sol Sheckman and the Essoldo Circuit.
No 32	£5.00	Harry Myers Photographs; Cinemas at the Coalface; Shaws of Darwen; Edward A Stone.
No 33	£5.00	Theodore Komisarjevsky; Circuit & other releases of 1956; The case for saving the New Victoria Bradford.
No 34	£5.00	Beaufort Birmingham; Granada Tooting in 1934; Rank in post-war Scotland; J Braddon's Cinema life.
No 35	£5.00	Holophane lighting; Imitations of Odeon; Cradley Records; 1909 Cinematograph Act; Kingston Showmanship.
No 36	£6.00	Leslie Kemp; Jeremy Perkins on Brighton; The Clifton Circuit; Circuit Releases of 1960.
No 37	£8.50	Special 92-page issue; saving the Electric Palace Harwich.
No 38	£6.00	Northern Morris Associated Cinemas; Point Milton Keynes; Going to the Cinema in Birmingham; Palace Conwy; Carlton Haymarket; Military Cinemas; Cinema Murders.
No 39	£6.00	WWI and the Film Trade; Tale of Two Regals; Majestic Oxford; Odeon North Finchley; Films at the Royal Albert Hall.
No 40	£6.00	Tolmer Euston; Michael Stringer memories; West End in the 1950s; Stafford Entertainments; Will Onda & James Atroy; Stephen Waddingham - a Granada man.
No 41	£6.00	CTA's 50th Anniversary; Plaza Stockport; Majestic Leeds; Grosvenor Rayners Lane; Pascal J Stienlet.
No 42	£6.00	Odeon Elephant & Castle, Plaza Crosby; Depot Lewes; Cineworld Chelsea; Gaumont Sheffield Figures.
No 43	£6.00	Virgin Cinemas; Peter Jewett's ABC memories; Scala Kings Cross; Picture House Campbelltown; Beeston/Nottingham memories.
No 44	£6.00	Village Cinemas of NE Scotland; William Keys' career; Bernard Snowball remembers Pt1.
No 45	£8.50	Classic Repertory Cinemas; Blackpool Cinemas; Thomas Jackson; Bernard Snowball remembers Pt2. Special 100-page issue.
No 46	£6.00	Cecil Clavering, Odeon Architect; Pavilion Hailsham; Working For Star; Focus Sevenoaks Figures.

There are also available a few second-hand copies of out-of-print issues of *Picture House* 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 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.

## Second-Hand Books

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



## 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 below.

## Still Available (reviewed in previous Bulletins)

**The Ten Cinemas of Chesham by Clive Foxell**

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

## 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](mailto: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](http://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 Change: A History of British Cinema from the Projection Box by Richard Wallace & Jon Burrows.**

256 pages, A5 paperback. ISBN9780861967513.

From Amazon or bookshops, about £31.

A technological revolution has swept through cinemas around the world, as analogue projectors were replaced with digital equipment. It was not just the medium of film that was removed from projection boxes during this transformation; most cinemas took this opportunity to also evict the human projectionists who were hitherto in charge of screenings. Projectionists had been hidden from the sight of audiences for most of the history of photographic moving image projection and their redundancies went largely unnoticed and unremarked upon.



**Before the Paris Fire: Projecting the Cinematograph in London from 1889 to 4 May 1897 by Tony Fletcher.**

182 pages, A4 paperback, fully illustrated.

ISBN 97812910722213. £13.50 including postage from Tony Fletcher, 11, Claverdale Road, London, SW2 2DJ. (enquiries: [celluloidtapestry@hotmail.com](mailto:celluloidtapestry@hotmail.com))



# THE CTA VISIT TO THE GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC & DRAMA & THE BARBICAN ARTS CENTRE

On 6 March 2023 by Mike Wood

Another of Marion Kennett's London visits drew a large group, despite it being a cold Monday morning. Her able assistant, husband John, had been dispatched to scan the horizon for the last to arrive, for which I offered a mumbled apology. My excuse is that the 2013 Milton Court extension to the Guildhall School of Music & Drama (GSMD) is an anonymous bland exterior easily missed but such treasures it hides, as we were about to see.



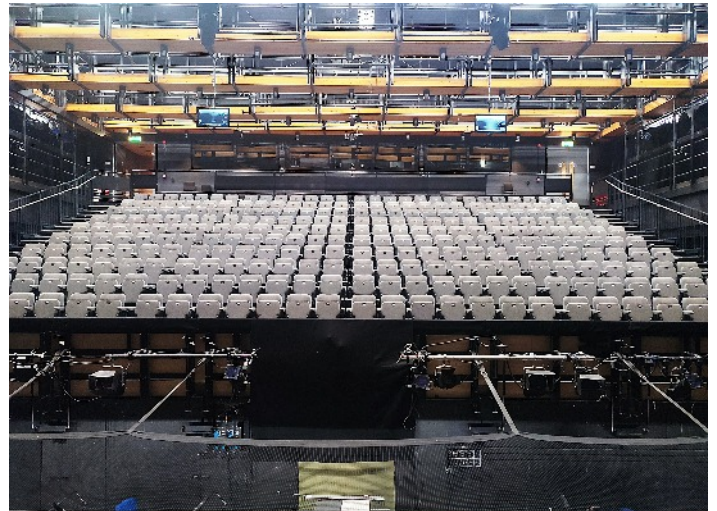
The Milton Court studio in 2014 [2]

Charles, our friendly and informative host had started out as a student at GSMD, which led to a career in theatre and is now back in the performance venues management. The Milton Court site houses a studio theatre, 608-seat concert hall, 223-seat drama theatre, rehearsal rooms and a television studio. Our first stop being the Milton Court studio theatre, with its steel mesh grid and seating rostra for 128 part-rigged. Then it was into the original Silk Street building and its much larger flexible theatre space that can seat up to 308 in all formats and with a large orchestra pit.



The GSMD Silk Street Theatre [4]

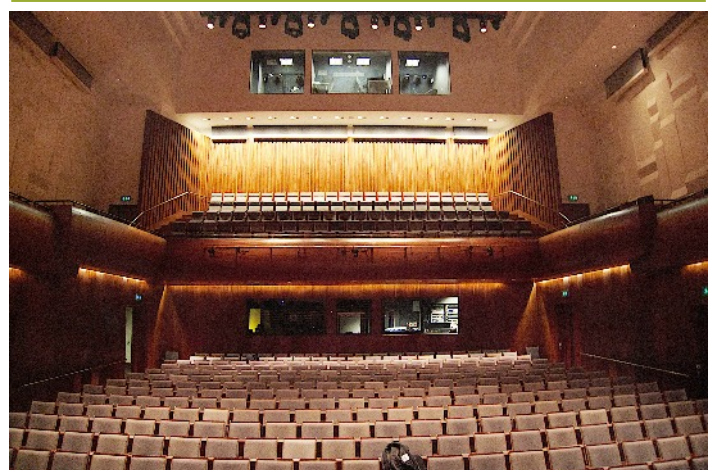
After time to linger for questions and photos, it was back into Milton Court for a look inside its theatre, which is lined in a dark smoked-oak timber. Seating is on three levels: stalls (with parterre), circle and upper circle, with the parterre, circle and upper circle curving round to meet the proscenium arch via side slips, which hint at box fronts to a traditional eye. A glitch in the house lighting controls on the day prevented a good look but the online link below has a 360° view. This was the visit highlight for me and took me back to an unforgettable student presentation of its technical facilities shortly after the theatre opened and a well-earned standing ovation.



The GSMD Silk Street Theatre from the stage [1]



The Milton Court Drama Theatre [2]



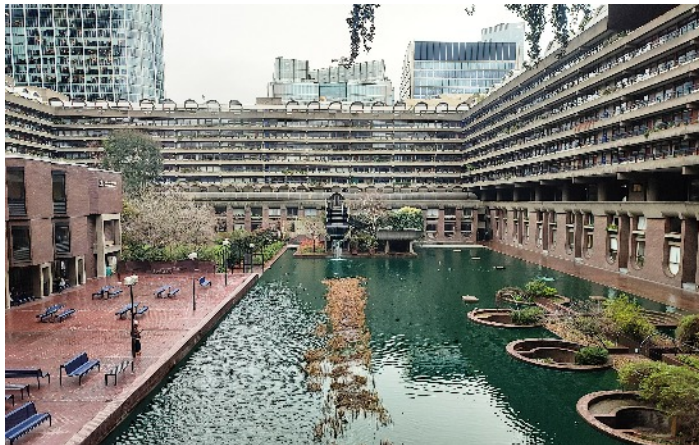
The Milton Court Concert Hall in 2014 [2]





The exterior of the Milton Court building in 2014 [2]

The other Milton Court main space is the **Concert Hall**, with perfect acoustics and seating for up to 608. On the day of our visit, the BBC had it booked thus preventing us exploring it but see the 360° view via the link below. The GSMD hires out its state-of-the-art facilities and also advertises public concerts. For us on a Monday morning, it was a treat to be amongst the best of its student population, pondering upon what might have been if only we had stuck at our piano lessons...



The Barbican courtyard on a rainy day [4]

Lunch on our own followed, with plenty of choice in the immediate vicinity, as detailed in the nicely illustrated visit notes. Since we were to re-group at the Barbican Centre, that's where I headed. Whilst the casual observer can overlook the exterior of Milton Court, that cannot be said for the exterior of the 1963/71 Barbican. However, I was to find that the place was heaving with gowned and capped students attending one of the main halls for graduation. Previous visits have usually found the vast public spaces in somewhat over-bearing concrete a little dispiriting but, on this day, the place was highly animated, students plus admiring families creating a great atmosphere.



The Barbican Cinema ① [4]



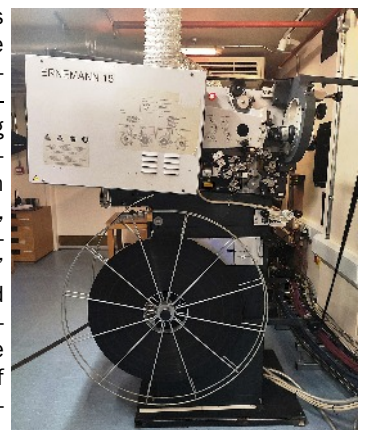
View to the screen in Barbican Cinemas ② & ③ [4]

At the allotted time and place we re-assembled for our tour of the Barbican cinemas with acting Head of Cinemas, Jonathan Gleneadie, who was to be our guide. First to view was Cinema ①, which seats 288 in steeply-raked stadium style, thus ensuring good sightlines. The screen is set back to allow a large forestage for conferences. Our host explained that this auditorium was the deepest point in the complex (Level -2) and that the construction left little room for conversion to the latest Widescreen formats. However, it is a popular venue for main release to art-house programming and is also often hired out. The decorative theme dates from the 2005 renovation and features back-lit vertical louvres and red house tabs.



The entrance to Barbican Cinemas ② & ③ [4]

The original two smaller screens were located at Level 4 and were re-purposed in 2012 for conference use; the replacement Cinemas ② and ③ (accommodating 156 each) are now on land acquired next to the Arts Centre on Beech Street. We viewed these, which are similar in style and comfort to multiplex intimate 'Luxe' style and featuring bar, café and restaurant facilities. The most popular feature for our group was the multi-format projection booth, of course; this being a most satisfactory climax to a CTA outing.



The box for Barbican Cinemas ② & ③ [4]

It was an enjoyable and interesting day out in the City of London for a change and our thanks go to Marion and John Kennett and to our welcoming and knowledgeable hosts.

Photos: [4] Kevin Gooding & [2] Mike Wood

#### Online Resources:

GSMD 360° Online Tour all Areas: [tinyurl.com/GSMD-360](http://tinyurl.com/GSMD-360)

Venues & Facilities: [tinyurl.com/GMSD-venues](http://tinyurl.com/GMSD-venues)

Milton Court Theatre: [tinyurl.com/Milton-Theatre](http://tinyurl.com/Milton-Theatre)

Wood Awards – Milton Court: [tinyurl.com/wood-milton](http://tinyurl.com/wood-milton)

Barbican: [www.barbican.org.uk](http://www.barbican.org.uk)

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# 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)

**Important note:** From the next issue, this section will be compiled by David Simpson, who will welcome members' contributions at [david.simpson399@btinternet.com](mailto:david.simpson399@btinternet.com) or by post at 399 Woodgrange Drive, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 3DY.

## ABERDEEN

Plans for a new Everyman in the Bon Accord shopping centre are in doubt as the centre's operators have gone into administration. It was due to open in 2024.

*Press & Journal; Evening Express, Aberdeen – 26 January*

## AYR



Mecca Bingo in the former Green's Playhouse closed on 26 February. It opened in July 1931 and with 3,104 seats was the second largest cinema to be built in Scotland and the third largest in the UK. Occasional live shows were held at the Playhouse but some were not that successful, as when Frank Sinatra and the Billy Ternent Broadcasting Orchestra were booked for two performances on Sunday 12 July 1953 and only a total of 500 tickets were sold for the two shows! Films ceased in 1969 and bingo took over. The building is listed Category B. {23270}

*Daily Record – 23 February; sent in by Jeremy Buck & Ken Roe; interior photo taken September 2009; exterior photo on front cover*

## BARNESLEY (South Yorks)



The Parkway has been awarded a heritage grant of £123,000. This will enable renovation works, improving the frontage and reinstating the 1950s-style illuminated signage. Work was due to start in January and be completed by the middle of March. It opened as the Gaumont in February 1956 and was renamed Odeon in 1962. It was twinned in 1980 with 636 seats in the former stalls and 419 in the former circle. It closed in September 2005 but was taken over by an independent almost two years later. The cinema is only one of a handful that can still show 70mm and 35mm film. Recently, certain shows of *Empire of Light* were presented on 35mm 20-minute reels with traditional changeovers. See also *Cinema Business* p9. {6208}

*The Business Desk – 11 January; Barnsley Chronicle – 13 January; Yorkshire Post – 20 January; photo taken April 2008*

## BELFAST

The new Avenue cinema opened in March in the CastleCourt shopping centre, in some of the space that was Debenhams. There will eventually be nine screens, each with 60 seats. (Only screens 2, 3, 5, 6 and 9 were operational at the opening.) These are the height of cinema luxury, with very comfortable sofa-like seats as standard. Each auditorium is equipped with the latest in Laser Barco projection and Dolby Digital surround sound. In a lovely touch, there is a display of material relating to the earlier Picture House / Regent / Avenue that was on the site. There are some photos and a short video at [tinyurl.com/belfast-avenue](http://tinyurl.com/belfast-avenue). {68644}

*News Letter – 9 March*

## BO'NESS (Falkirk)



The Hippodrome has been given permission to use 48 'heritage' seats, increasing its capacity to 220. The seats are already in place but have not been used as they are slightly to the side of the main seating area and narrower. The cinema opened in March 1912 and closed in the early 1970s. Bingo took over until about 1980. The building lay empty for over 30 years and was restored, starting in 2006. It reopened in April 2009; the CTA visited in September 2008. It is listed Category A. {23125} photo taken September 2008 on CTA visit

*Falkirk Herald – 15 December; Linlithgow Gazette – 16 December*

## BOURNEMOUTH

This former Regal/Gaumont/Odeon is back on the market with a price tag of £5.2 million. Opening in 1929, the Regent was designed for Provincial Cinematograph Theatres by Seal and Hardy, the Bournemouth-based architectural firm associated with many of the town's grander buildings. The Regent became the Gaumont in 1946 and finally the Odeon in 1986. The cinema closed in 2017 and planning has been passed for apartment development; however, the frontage and parts of the rear in Hinton Road are to be kept in the scheme agreed by the Council. {20081}

*Sent in by David Eve*

## BRADFORD (West Yorks)

The National Science and Media Museum is set to close in June for 18 months for a £6m project to create two new galleries and improve accessibility. During this time the Pictureville cinema will continue to operate, as it has a separate entrance. {3673}

*Museums + Heritage Advisor – 13 January*

Firefighters were called to the New Victoria / Odeon on 24 February after smoke was seen coming from the roof. The fire was in the space below the dome of the south turret and was quickly extinguished. A multi-million-pound project is underway to transform the building into Bradford Live, a venue and entertainment hub. It was originally due to open in the autumn but it has been found that certain parts of the building need to be replaced rather than refurbished, meaning the date has been put back to 2024. {3677}

*ITV News website – 24 February; Yorkshire Post – 2 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

## BRENTWOOD (Essex)

A new cinema is being proposed for the Baytree Centre. The concept drawing in the newspaper report has the word Everyman on it.

*Romford Recorder – 27 January*



## BRIDGNORTH (Shropshire)



The Majestic/Reel celebrated its 85<sup>th</sup> birthday last November. It opened as the Ritz with 1,030 seats but was taken over by ABC and renamed Majestic within a year. It was twinned in 1982 with 500 seats in the stalls and the circle was later further subdivided into two 86-seat screens. Projectionist Gary Biddlestone has worked there for almost 50 years and is looking forward to the cinema's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. {19007}

*Express & Star – 28 December; photo taken August 2007*

## BRIGHTON

The Grade II\* listed Theatre Royal is to close in June for a twelve-month multi-million-pound restoration. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century façade is set to be replaced. The Ambassador Theatre group, which owns the theatre, has said that the Colonnade pub next door will not close.

*The Argus, Brighton – 24 December*

## BRISTOL

A protestor shouted "Outrageous!" and stormed out of a Council meeting after being told it was too late to save the former Broadway in Filwood from the bulldozers. Plans were approved back in 2019 and demolition is due to be completed by May, after several delays. The committee was meeting to vote on the Council's planning application for homes to be built on the site. The cinema opened in 1938 and films ceased in 1971. It became a bingo club, which closed in 1992. The building has been vacant since. {47281}

*B24/7 – 19 January; Bristol Post – 20 January*



Cinema-goers are asking the owners of the fourteen-screen Showcase in Avonmeads to keep its "unique character". New seating has already been installed and carpeting removed in half of the screens with the rest of the screens and the foyer likely to also be refurbished. The petition asks that Showcase "maintain and preserve the current foyer fittings (especially the neon) and that whatever work that is done in the future is keeping with the early 90s character of the building". {24281}

*B24/7 – 3 February; photo taken March 2006*

The Bristol Beacon has announced it will reopen on 30 November after a five-year transformation. Formerly known as Colston Hall, the 2,000 plus capacity Victorian music venue has been closed since 2018 as it underwent a £132m refurbishment, almost three times its original estimate. {39309}

*BBC News website – 14 February*

## BROUGHTY FERRY (Dundee)

Plans for partial demolition on safety grounds of the Category C listed Regal have been passed, despite a previous refusal, which we reported on p20 of the last Bulletin. Historic Environment Scotland withdrew their opposition. {23054}

*Dundee Courier – 14 February*

## BURY ST EDMUNDS (Suffolk)

Amended plans have been approved for the new Everyman due to open in the basement of the former Debenhams in the Arc Shopping Centre. The initial plans included five screens; however, the cinema now wants to install just three screens, with 94, 74 and 60 seats. The proposed hours have been revised after concerns about late-night noise and disturbance. No opening date has been confirmed.

*Bury Free Press – 24 February; Suffolk News – 18 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock*

## CAMBRIDGE

Plans have been submitted for a new five-screen 324-seat Everyman cinema in the Grand Arcade. It would be in three former retail units on the first floor. If permission is granted, it could open in 2024.

*Cambridge News – 21 January*

## CASTLEFORD (West Yorks)

Planning permission has been granted to turn the former Picture House into 25 high-end flats. It opened in 1921 with 1,200 seats and films ceased in 1962. It was then used as a bingo hall and later a nightclub and bar. It has been derelict since a suspected arson attack in 2017. {6292}

*Yorkshire Post – 10, 12 December*

## CHESTER



Mecca Bingo in the former Gaumont closed on 26 February. The cinema opened in March 1931 with 1,997 seats, a full stage and a Compton organ. Films ceased in December 1961 and the building was converted into a bowling alley, later becoming bingo. {24830}

*Cheshire Live – 18 January; photo taken July 2007*

## CHESTERFIELD (Derbys)

The local Civic Society has unveiled a blue plaque on the Winding Wheel to mark its centenary. It opened as the Picture House in September 1923 with 1,328 seats in stalls and circle. It was enlarged in 1930 and was renamed Odeon in 1937. Films ceased in June 1981 and the building lay unused until 1987. It was bought by the Council and refurbished as concert, conference and exhibition hall and banquet facility. It is listed Grade II. {22413}

*Chesterfield News – 3 March; sent in by Terry Hanstock*



**Six More Pages of Newsreel  
in the full Bulletin**



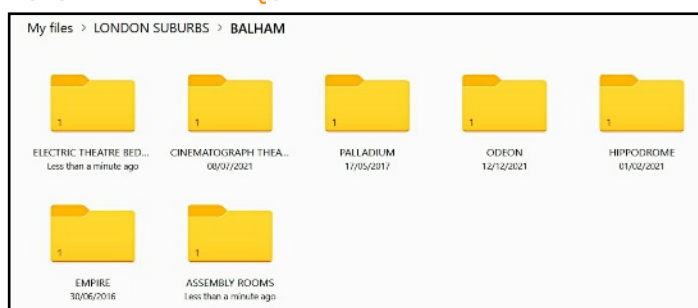
# CTA ARCHIVE

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.

## 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.

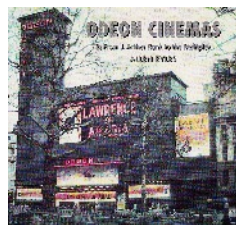
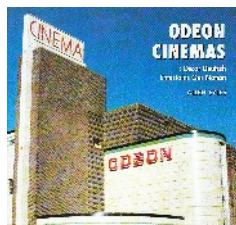
## VOLUNTEER HELP REQUIRED



The Archive stores tens of thousands of images and documents electronically using a cloud storage system called OneDrive. With the digitisation of photographs in full swing, it is proving increasingly hard to keep up with the 'electronic filing' and we are seeking a home-based volunteer to provide some administrative support. Files are stored in folders by each cinema, within a folder for each place in the UK. The task is to simply move files to their appropriate folders, or if no folder exists, to create one. Anyone familiar with moving documents around on a computer, OneDrive, or similar cloud storage system and has some spare time to help out, we would like to hear from you.

## 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

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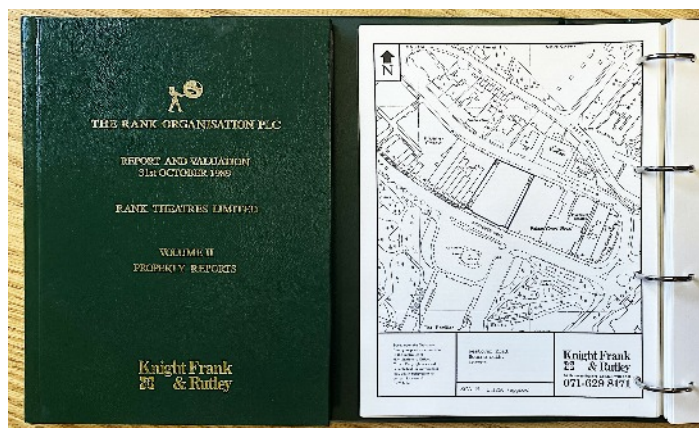
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Please visit the *Donating Material* page of the website. Almost everything held in the Archive has been donated and is the main way that the collection grows. The Archive will not turn down material which is on subject and adds to the breadth of its 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.

## RANK PROPERTY SURVEYS



We would like to thank Dean Morton, former Odeon Cinemas' Development Manager at the Rank Organisation's head office at Whyteleafe for donating sets of bound property surveys carried out to assess their properties in 1989 and 1992. It is a comprehensive record of all their then High Street cinemas. These surveys show each cinema's location, a description and an overview of the property details, including assessments of the state of repair, the seating capacity, the number of screens and whether the property is freehold or leasehold and, in the case of leasehold, the terms of the lease and its expiry date. Whilst much of this information is known and published piecemeal elsewhere, this is a definitive and comprehensive internal perspective. It documents Odeon's cinema estate on the cusp of the emerging competition from new multiplex cinema operators and prior to Odeon's own investment in multiplex sites.

## 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.

## ARCHIVE TWITTER

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

## CONTACTING THE ARCHIVE

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

Clive Polden, CTA Archivist



# LETTERS

## EASTBOURNE THEATRES



The Royal Hippodrome Theatre Eastbourne  
The CTA held their AGM there in 2010

Having just moved to Eastbourne seven weeks ago, we thought you might like a report on the local theatres. Three are four-minute walks from our flat and the other is fifteen minutes. The **Royal Hippodrome Theatre** has been shut for three months for the auditorium to be repainted and new carpets and seats fitted. We managed to get a sneak viewing as we knew the contractor, Barney Paul, who took us in for a peep. It's very smart. Out have gone the drapes in front of the circle and there is new plasterwork like in the past. It was due to open on 24 March with a free variety show. The **Congress Theatre** has had a big overhaul and looks fine with a welcome centre next to it that serves as a new entrance to it and the **Winter Gardens**, which has also had a revamp – but the front still looks very shabby. The **Devonshire Park Theatre** still looks fine.

Brenda and Trevor Owen; photo taken April 2008

## JIGSAW



Further to the jigsaw you printed in your editorial on p2 of the last Bulletin, here is one I too got from a charity shop. It's the same cinema but in a different town.

Philip Stevens

## PROJECTION BOX MEMORIES THANKS

I really enjoyed Mike Whitcombe's fascinating article *Projection Box Memories* in the last Bulletin. For me, his memories of screen tabs swishing open and blasting out the Twentieth Century Fox fanfare sums it all up. I so miss those days of showmanship it brings a tear to my eye! Am I the only one who misses a few tramlines on the picture or crackles and pops of an optical soundtrack? I find it interesting that Mike worked at the old Portsmouth Odeon as I live just outside of Portsmouth but never visited this cinema. I always went to Southampton (Odeon/ABC/Gaumont) or Fareham Embassy. Perhaps Mike could be persuaded to write more of these memories.

Rodney Fuller

## GRAND CINEMA RYHOPE – REBUILD AT BEAMISH MUSEUM



Helen Barker, Assistant Director at Beamish Open Air Museum, emailed me asking me to make contact as they wanted me to go up for a photoshoot regarding the start of the rebuild and the next section of the 1950s Village extension. I went and was extremely welcomed and they had a number of people and architects there and we had coffee and cakes at 10am. I was asked to go on to the site, which was being prepared and the man who does the videos etc took a video of all of us and they gave me a 2,000 ft spool, which I recall saving from the rewind room at the **Grand** and I held it while the executives of Beamish and the architect etc stood for filming. They wanted a separate interview with me, which they filmed about my time at the **Grand** from my young age of 10 to 15 when I officially left school. I mentioned my having to go round the auditorium each evening prior to opening spraying the rows with 'Crommesol' Orange Blossom and how, when I had my own cinema operations, I carried on that tradition in them all. I believe Julie (the press officer) said she was sending it all to the papers. I did speak to the main architect and she told me that she expects the cinema to be ready around next January. Helen also said that when the brickwork starts, they want me to lay a brick for posterity (whatever that means) but we shall see? I spoke to the foreman on the project and he said that the foundations should be done around just after Easter, followed by the erecting of the steel work etc. When opened, the **Grand** will run as a 1950s period cinema in the new 1950s village. There will be a lift in the joined building for wheelchairs to have access to the circle! Details and a 3-minute video can be seen on the Museum's website at [tinyurl.com/beamish-grand](http://tinyurl.com/beamish-grand).

Bill Mather; photo taken in cinema's original location in September 2006

## SOUTH WALES CINEMAS

Tim McCullen's article in the last Bulletin on the **Capitol Cinema** in Cardiff reminded me of seeing the film *Doctor Zhivago* in the mid-1960s in its vast 3,000-seater auditorium. I would like to point out however that, contrary to Tim's point about the successful planning application to convert to a bingo hall, the City Council in fact rejected Rank's plans in 1976 on the grounds that bingo would not be in keeping with the businesses in Queen Street at the time and also the scheme caused much outrage and opposition amongst many locals. It is likely that this accelerated the closure of the **Capitol** on 21 January 1978 and the existence of the nearby two-screen **Odeon** in Queen Street cannot have helped.

The **Capitol** or 'Cap' as the cinema was affectionately known is sometimes quoted as the largest cinema built in Wales but this is not the case, that distinction belonging to the **Plaza Cinema** in Swansea with a seating accommodation of 3,020. Cardiff's Queen Street was however home to the third and fourth largest Welsh cinemas, namely the **Empire** (later **Gaumont**) with 2,599 seats and **Olympia/ABC** with 2,047 seats. The fifth largest Welsh cinema was the **Albert Hall** in Swansea with 2,000 seats, the only one of the five mentioned still standing and currently in the process of being converted to a live music venue.

John Skinner

More Letters in the full Bulletin



# WHERE IT ALL STARTED FOR ME

By David Evans

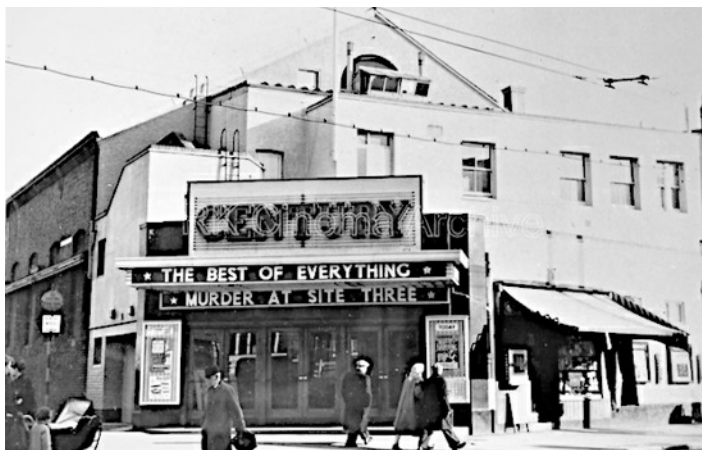
During my thirty-two-year career with Air France I had the opportunity to enjoy films in many different cinemas, from those in France where, way back in the 1960s, you still had to tip the ouvreuse [usherette] for showing you to your seat – you forgot at your peril! – to iconic movie theatres such as Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood and the Radio City Music Hall in New York City. However, all this was far removed from where my love of cinemas and films all began, in the 1950s, my Home 'Town', Leyton, London E10.

Until the formation of the Greater London Council in 1965, Leyton was a Municipal Borough in the county of Essex and the borough included Leytonstone, some of which was attached to Epping Forest. The main 'Ciné-Thoroughfare' was Leyton High Road with Leytonstone High Road fulfilling the same function in that part of the area. Moving down Leyton High Road, on the way to Walthamstow, the first cinema was the Astoria, which changed its name to the Regal in 1954 before closing for good in 1955. The Astoria, an independent, managed on what it could get to fill its 500-odd seats but I imagine that a 1950 Cinecolor offering, *Black Gold*, starring Anthony Quinn attracted fewer patrons than what have been quite a coup for it, *Alias Nick Beal* or *The Contact Man* in the UK, starring Ray Milland, which followed this and was lauded by the theatre as "for the first time in Leyton!"



The Essoldo Leyton – photo Cinema Treasures date unknown

Next came the Picture House or Essoldo by the time I first went there in 1954. Later in the 1950s this had the reputation of being rather a 'flea-pit' but in 1954 Essoldo Cinemas had been chosen by 20<sup>th</sup> Century-Fox, after its falling out with the Rank Organisation, as one of the chains to take its sensational CinemaScope process pictures. I remember seeing *There's No Business Like Show Business* (1954) there with my mother and *Daddy Long Legs* and *The River of No Return* a little later, with a school friend who is still a good friend, Peter Such – all on what to us was seemed a breathtakingly wide screen. I also seem to remember that before closure in 1959, its circle was not in use. Was it unsafe? No idea – but I survived my many subsequent visits there.



The Century Leyton c1960 – photo courtesy Ron Knee

About three-quarters of a mile along, in the commercial centre of Leyton (there was a Woolworth's!) known as the Baker's Arms for a local pub and alms-houses – stood the Ritz. To my young eyes, when I knew nothing of palaces like the Radio City Music Hall in Manhattan or the Rex on the Boulevard Poissonnière in Paris, this was the most luxurious cinema I had ever seen from its imposing entrance to its 2,400 plus-seat auditorium. All part of the ABC circuit and memorable for my introduction to 3-D pictures. With either my mother, father or both I saw *The Charge at Feather River*, *Kiss Me Kate* and *Hondo* all through 'Polaroid' glasses, for which I believe they had to pay sixpence each – this in 1954. Did that mean that we went without ice cream at intermission time? Another film that I found very exciting was *The High and the Mighty* a CinemaScope picture with John Wayne battling to keep a damaged airliner aloft. Could that have sown the seed of my future career in the airline industry? See photo p5 Bulletin 56/6.

A few hundred yards further on was the Century, which from 1951 was part of the Granada circuit taking the North-East London Odeon release. This was where I saw the first movie made in the 'VistaVision' process promoted by Paramount Pictures – *White Christmas* (1954) and where I saw my first X-feature *The Brides of Dracula* at the end of the decade.



The Plaza Leyton in August 2007 – photo by Ken Roe

Just another short distance away, where Leyton High Road met Hoe Street, stood the 800-odd seat Plaza, another cinema with a 'flea-pit' reputation. For me, the highlight of its programming was its feature film plus six cartoons season. The cartoons were always delightful but the feature was very often something like *Where There's a Will* (1955) which the eminent film historian David Shipman once described as a "Grade Z Comedy".



The Savoy/Gaumont Leyton in September 2004 – photo Harry Rigby

Off the beaten track, as it were, was the Gaumont on Church and Lea Bridge Roads. This was not quite as palatial as the Ritz but it came a close second and was still often called the Savoy, its original name 1928-1950. In an era when queues for a popular picture were often very long, the Gaumont offered patrons the possibility of waiting in the auditorium via a sort of gallery/walkway on one side of the theatre.

As for Leytonstone, with the Academy, Rex, Rialto and State, these increased picture-going possibilities enormously but, in most cases, the six Leyton cinemas were really where it all really started for me.