

ORPHEUS CINEMA HENLEAZE



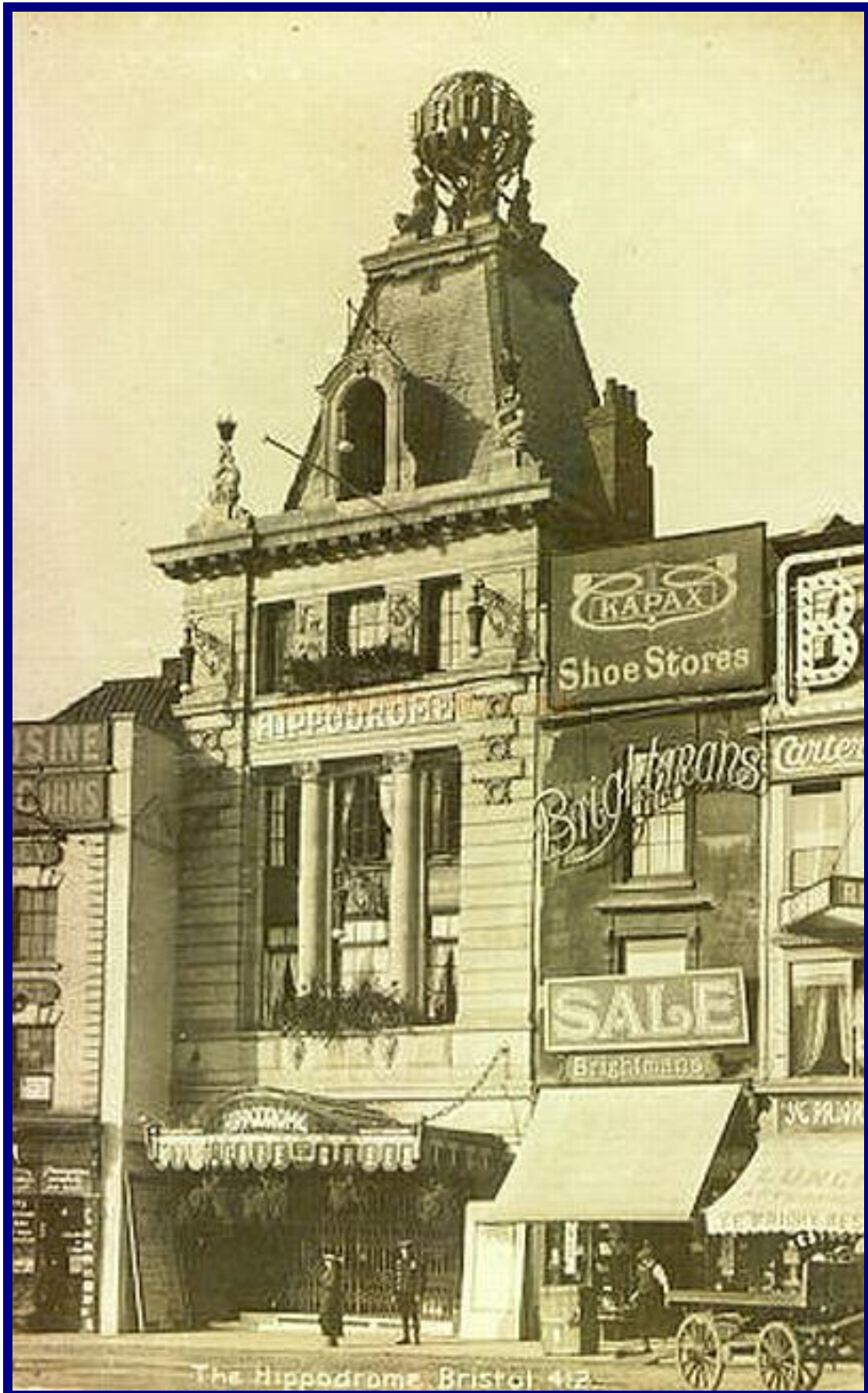
ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORY

BRISTOL CINEMAS

PART TWO 1914-1940

BRIAN ROBERTS

HIPPODROME ST. AUGUSTINE'S PARADE



The Hippodrome Bristol 412

ODEON UNION STREET



This Book, which is in Two Parts, features historic photographs with supplementary notes on Bristol Cinemas. Part One covers from 1909 to 1914. Part Two continues through 1914 to 1940. Some 61 cinemas in Bristol, starting with those showing silent films, have been identified of which 48 are included in this book. Information sources include the specialist websites *Cinema Treasures* and *Arthur Lloyd*, the 2005 book "Bristol Cinemas" and the Allen Eyles publications of the Cinema Theatre Association and British Film Institute.

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A list of the Bristol Cinemas in Part One is given on Page 4.

The List of Cinemas in Part Two follows on Page 5.

BRISTOL CINEMAS IN PART ONE 1900-1914

Cinemas are listed in order of the year in which they started. Many date from before World War I, the majority of the others from the 1930s. A few were destroyed in the World War II Blitz on Bristol. Now, many have been through a change of ownership and most have been closed or demolished. Some cinemas have been used as a bingo hall, supermarket, shop and even a garage.

This author was born in Bristol and lived there until 1954, being a regular patron of those cinemas listed in bold type. The names of the cinemas used are those familiar to the author. Alternative ownership names are shown in brackets in the listing below.

- 1909-32 Gem Theatre. No.7 Broadweir.
- 1909-54 Town Hall. Cannon Street, Bedminster.
- 1909-54 Vestry Hall. Pennywell Road.
- 1910-63 Olympia. Carey's Lane. (Tatler).
- 1910-33 Queen's Picture House. No. 17 Peter Street.
- 1911-27 Clare Street Picture House.
- 1911-26 Fishponds Picture House.
- 1911-90 His Majestys. No. 424 Stapleton Rd. (Concorde).
- 1911-76 Kings, Old Market Street. (Kings-ABC).**
- 1911-64 Park Picture House. Church Road, St. George. (Park-ABC).
- 1911-19 Picturedrome. East Street, Bedminster.
- 1911-41 Redcliffe Hall Picture Palace. Redcliffe Hill.
- 1912-24 Coliseum. Park Row.
- 1912-61 Granada. Church Road, Redfield. (St. George's Hall).
- 1912-80 New Palace. Baldwin Street. (People's Palace/Gaumont).**
- 1912-63 Regal. (Staple Hill Picture House).
- 1912-49 Regent Picture House. Regent Street, Kingswood.
- 1912-16 Tivoli. Broadmead.
- 1913-56 Brislington Picture Hall. Sandy Park Road.
- 1913-59 Hippodrome. No. 309 Stapleton Road, Eastville.
- 1913-61 Knowle Picture House. Nos. 109-111 Wells Road.
- 1913-68 Metropole. Ashley Rd.
- 1914-73 Globe. Church Road, Lawrence Hill.
- 1914-37 Magnet. Nos. 51-53 Newfoundland Street.
- 1914-54 Plaza. No. 275 North Street, Bedminster. (Ashton).
- 1914-63 Premier. Gloucester Rd.**
- 1914-40 Triangle. Clifton. (Triangle-ABC).

BRISTOL CINEMAS IN PART TWO 1914-1940

Cinemas are listed in order of the year in which they started. Many date from before World War I, the majority of the others from the 1930s. A few were destroyed in the World War II Blitz on Bristol. Now, many have been through a change of ownership and most have been closed or demolished. Some cinemas have been used as a bingo hall, supermarket, shop and even a garage.

This author was born in Bristol and lived there until 1954, being a regular patron of those cinemas listed in bold type. The names of the cinemas used are those familiar to the author. Alternative ownership names are shown in brackets in the listing below.

1914-55 Academy. Cheltenham Rd. (Plaza).

1915-41 Hippodrome. East Street, Bedminster. (Stoll).

1915-39 Hotwells Cinema Theatre. Hotwells Road.

1919-22 Clifton Cinema. Queens Road, Clifton. (Victoria Rooms).

1919-74 Scala. Cromwell Road, St. Andrews. (Pringle's Picture Palace/Zetland).

1921-2002 Whiteladies Picture House. Whiteladies Road, Clifton. (Whiteladies-ABC).

1922-36 Baths Cinema. Gloucester Road, Bishopston. (**Bristol North Baths**).

1926-73 Vandyck. Nos. 748-756 Fishponds Road. (Vandyck-ABC).

1928-59 Kingsway. No. 93 Two Mile Hill.

1928-40 Regent. Castle St. (Granada).

1931-39 Empire. Old Market. (**The Empire Palace of Varieties**/Empire-ABC).

1932-38 Bristol Hippodrome. No. 13 St. Augustine's Parade. (**Hippodrome Theatre**).

1933-59 Carlton. Canford Lane, Westbury-on-Trym.

1933-63 Embassy, Queens Avenue.

1933-95 Gaiety. Wells Rd.

1933-56 News Theatre. Peter Street.

1933-62 Savoy. Station Road, Shirehampton.

1935-61 Cabot. Gloucester Road North, Filton. (Cabot-ABC).

1936-61 Odeon. Winterstoke Road, Bedminster. (Ambassador).

1938-61 Broadway. Filwood Park, Knowle.

1938-61 Odeon. Kingswood. (Ambassador)

1938-present Odeon. Union St.

1938-71 Orpheus. Northumbria Drive, Henleaze. (New Orpheus/Studio Five-to Seven).

1938-68 Ritz. Bristol Hill, Brislington.

1940-80 Rex. North Street, Bedminster. (Rex-ABC).

ACADEMY CHELTENHAM ROAD 1914-55

Opened in 1914 as the Cheltenham. Sometime after a change of ownership in 1933 it was renamed the Plaza. It changed ownership again in the 1940s. In the early 1950s, it became the Academy cinema, but closed in 1955 and was purchased by the Christadelphians for £7000 to be used as a place of worship. In 1998, it was converted into a pub and restaurant and renamed the Magic Box, as in the above photo, in honour of the Bristol film pioneer William Friese-Greene (see pages 37-39 of Part One). The building is Grade II Listed.

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HIPPODROME BEDMINSTER 1915-41



The Hippodrome on East Street opened as a Music Hall in 1911, but the owners ran into financial difficulties. It was taken over by Mr Stoll who had built the well-known Hippodrome in St. Augustine's Parade. He converted the building into a cinema and renamed it the Stoll Picture Theatre, which opened in 1915. The Stoll received a direct hit during the blitz of 1941 and was destroyed.

HOTWELLS CINEMA 1915-39

Situated in the dock's area on Hotwells Road, the cinema was a single-story building seating 450. It closed in 1939. No photograph has been found by the author.

CLIFTON CINEMA QUEENS ROAD 1919-22



Located at the junction of Queens Road and Whiteladies Road, the Victoria Rooms described as "an elegant, impressive building in the Greek Revival style" opened in 1842. In around 1919, the Victoria Rooms were leased from Bristol University and became the Clifton Cinema. There were a repeated problems over its licence and objections to the large name board. The cinema lasted until 1922 when it closed.

SCALA ST. ANDREWS 1919-74

Opened in 1910 as Pringle's Picture Palace, located just off the busy Zetland Road junction and tram depot. It seated 1000 downstairs and 400 in the balcony and is said to have been visited by Cary Grant when a child. It was sold in 1914 and its name changed to the Zetland. With a new owner in 1933, it was renamed the Scala. After being closed in 1974 it became a furniture store and was later demolished.

WHITELADIES ABC CLIFTON 1921-2002



Located on Whiteladies Road, the Whiteladies Picture House opened in 1921 with 1300 seats. It came with the "luxurious" Rendezvous Cafe Restaurant having eight murals such as "Alice in Wonderland" and "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." There was a tower with the cinema's name in electric lights. Later, it was taken over by its rival, the Triangle, who sold it to ABC. In 1978, the Whiteladies was converted to three screens and was closed in 2002.

BATHS CINEMA BISHOPSTON 1922-36

The Bristol North Baths on Gloucester Road were constructed in 1915, but taken over by the Government for the manufacture of aircraft wings which were then transported to the Bristol Aeroplane Company at Filton. Initially, the pool water was unheated and often empty in winter when no one wanted to swim. In 1922, it was converted into the Baths Cinema by emptying the pool, covering with a wooden floor and providing seats. In summer, the cinema reverted to a pool and this continued until 1936 when it became a full-time pool again. The North Baths finally closed in 2005, and after a number of unsuccessful attempts with various renovation schemes, it was converted into luxury offices.

VANDYCK ABC FISHPONDS ROAD 1926-73



Opened in 1926, the Vandyck seated 742 in the stalls, 332 upstairs and was complete with a full orchestra. It was temporarily closed in 1973, given a £100,000 facelift, and changed into a bingo hall "because the local people didn't support it." This closed in 1996. The building was acquired by Wetherspoons who converted it into a pub called the Vandyck Forum.

KINGSWAY TWO MILE HILL 1928-59



The Kingsway Cinema cost £9000 to build, could seat 900 people and opened in 1928. In the 1950s, it showed "blue" films on Sunday Mornings to a men-only audience. It still closed in 1959 and became a car showroom.

REGENT CASTLE STREET 1928-40



When opened in 1928 the Regent was described as "a place of high entertainment" with a troupe of nine dancing girls, a soprano, a twenty-two-piece orchestra and a Wurlitzer organ. The auditorium seated 2014 and had standing room for another 212 at the back of the stalls. In November 1940, on a Sunday when fortunately opening was banned, the building was bombed, gutted by fire, but not completely destroyed. The ruins remained until the end of the 1950s when it became a car park.

EMPIRE OLD MARKET 1931-39



The Empire Palace of Varieties opened as a Music Hall in 1893. It became a cinema in 1931 which was taken over by ABC in 1932. By 1937, there were so many competing cinemas in Bristol, some live entertainment was reintroduced. In 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, the Empire was closed, but soon reopened as a variety theatre. With redevelopment of the area the Empire was demolished in 1964.

HIPPODROME 1932-38



In 1912, the Bristol Hippodrome opened as a theatre. As a trial, a full-length talkie was screened in 1929. Live theatre ended in 1932, but the people of Bristol asked why such a beautiful theatre was being wasted by showing films. So, in 1938, the Hippodrome was closed for renovation and redecoration and reopened as a theatre once more. Since then, the Hippodrome has been considered Bristol's premier theatre.

HIPPODROME 1932-38

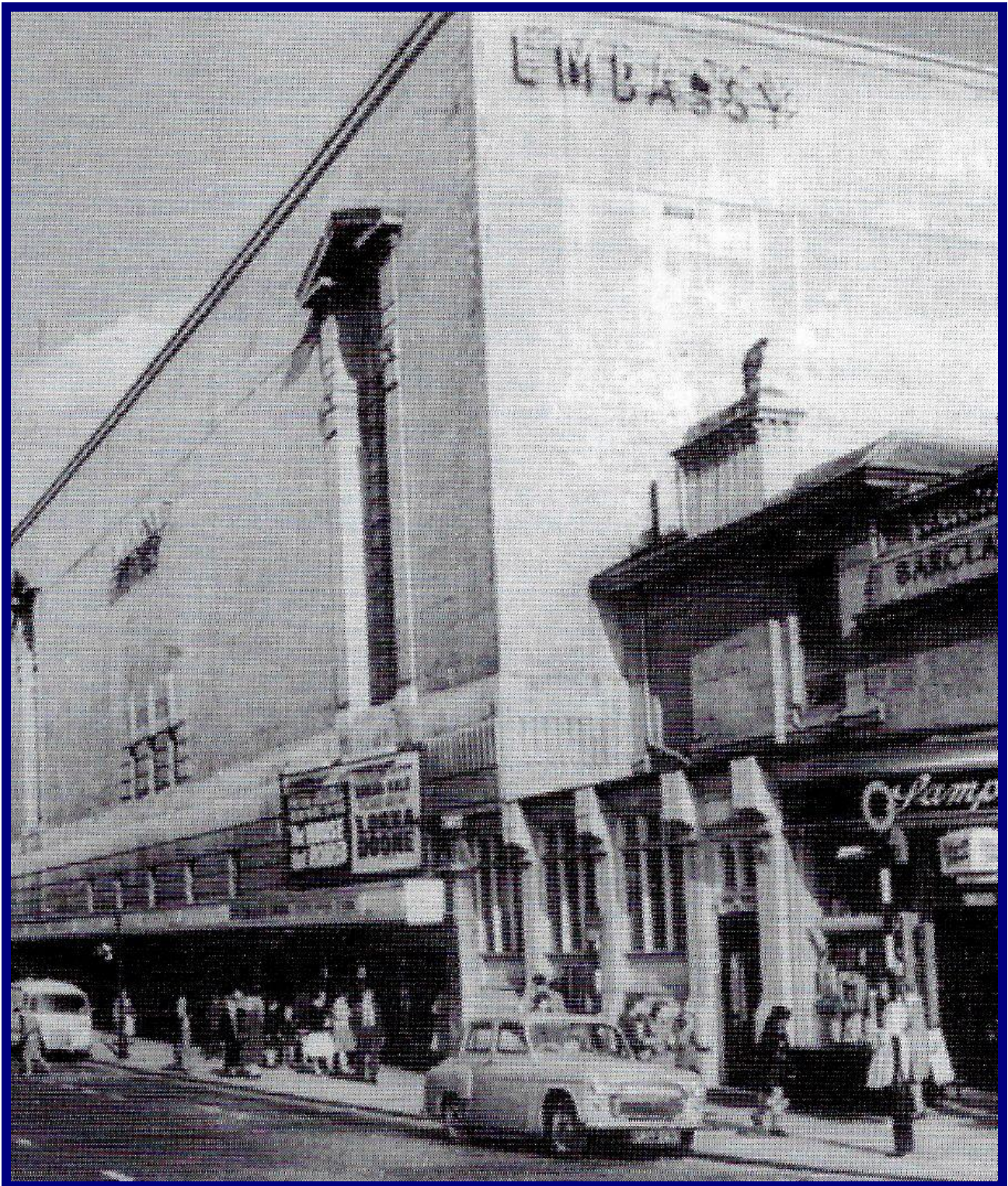


CARLTON WESTBURY-ON-TRYM 1933-59



Opening in 1933 and situated on Canford Lane, the Carlton had 820 seats and was well served by local bus routes with a bus stop right outside. It was closed in 1959, demolished and replaced by The Carlton Court shopping precinct.

EMBASSY QUEENS AVENUE 1933-63



When built in 1933, the Embassy was Bristol's biggest cinema seating 2100 people, including 700 in the large balcony. Live band concerts were often held on a Sunday evening. The cinema was closed in 1963 and later demolished. It was said it was too big to survive?

GAIETY WELLS ROAD 1933-95



The Gaiety opened on Boxing Day in 1933. One report says it even had underfloor heating and there was a dance floor for 125 people on the balcony floor. The large white building was considered an easy target in the war and incendiary bombs landed on the roof but burned themselves out. The time came when it could no longer compete with rival cinemas. It closed in 1995 and was demolished in 2000.

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SAVOY SHIREHAMPTON 1933-62



The Savoy opened in Station Road in 1933 with 700 seats downstairs and 200 in the balcony. It was known locally as the Cabbage, after Savoy Cabbage. It closed in 1962 and was converted into a bingo hall. It finally closed in 2000, but plans to turn the building into a supermarket were rejected and it was demolished in 2003.

CABOT ABC FILTON 1935-61



The Cabot Cinema at Gloucester Road North opened in October 1935 with seating for 1114 people. It was almost immediately leased to ABC. In 1939, with the advent of war, it became a recruitment centre for auxiliary firemen, air-raid wardens and first-aid personnel. The Cabot was close to the BAC aircraft factories and airfield at Filton, a prime target. In 1956, the ABC lease expired and was taken back by the original owner. The lack of good films and the popularity of television sealed its fate and the Cabot closed in 1961. It later became a video store before being demolished.

ODEON BEDMINSTER 1936-61



The Odeon at Winterstoke Road opened as the Ambassador Cinema in 1936 and seated 1250. After the Second World War, it was taken over by the J. Arthur Rank Organisation and run as a cinema until 1961 when bingo became more profitable. In the 1970s, it was the Top Rank Club. Later, after renovation, it became a children's play centre.

Its sister, the larger Art Deco Ambassador in Kingswood opened in 1938 with seating for 2000. Taken over after the war by Odeon it closed in 1961 and Rank, the new owner, converted the building into a ten-pin bowling alley.

ODEON UNION STREET 1938-present



The Odeon opened in July 1938 being built on the site of the J.S. Fry chocolate factory which had moved to Somerdale in 1921. The old factory stood empty until demolished to make for the 1900 seat Odeon. The cinema survived the war. It was given a major facelift with widescreen in 1967. In 1974, it was turned into a multi-screen cinema,

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ORPHEUS HENLEAZE 1938-71



The Orpheus opened in Northumbria Drive in Henleaze on 28 February 1938 with 1400 seats. A plaque was erected to William Friese-Greene, the Bristolian, a renowned photographer and a pioneer of moving film (see pages 37-39 in Part One). It closed in 1971, was demolished and a replaced by a supermarket. However, the Studios Five to Seven multiscreen was added, but later closed and replaced by the New Orpheus.

<26>

RITZ BRISLINGTON 1938-68



Located on Bristol Hill, the Ritz opened in 1938 with 1400 seats and a "scented ventilation system." The cinema survived the war, but closed in 1968. In 1970, the building was partially demolished, becoming a supermarket and later a DIY store.

<27>

REX ABC BEDMINSTER 1940-80



The Rex ABC in North Street opened in late 1940, but was very badly damaged in the Good Friday blitz of 1941. After rebuilding, the cinema flourished due to the activities and clever advertising by the manager. After closing in 1980, like many Bristol cinemas it became a bingo hall.

CINEMA EQUIPMENT 1936

C: INTERIOR

3: EQUIPMENT

By E. F. Tulley

Mr. Tulley deals with the equipment, mechanical and otherwise, of the modern super cinema theatre. His remarks apply to any super cinema of the present day, but to enhance their value, are based on the requirements at the Gaumont Palace, opened in Chelsea, S.W., a month or two ago. All the accompanying drawings and photographs are of that cinema. It seats 2,700 persons, and was designed by Mr. W. E. Trent and Mr. Tulley, the author of this article.

THE operating box suite is the nerve centre of the modern cinema. In general practice the most suitable position for it is immediately behind the rear wall of the circle, where it should be planned as a self-contained unit. Alternative positions are either immediately under or in the centre of the circle. From the circle a shorter and, perhaps, straighter throw is obtained from the machines, but there are disadvantages which greatly outweigh any advantages gained by this position.

OPERATING BOX SUITE

The operating box or projection booth, say about 28 ft. long by 14 ft. wide, should be planned on the centre axis of the theatre, and equipped with at least two projector machines, usually a third as a stand-by, probably two spot machines and the sound equipment. To reduce the excessive heat from the arcs each machine is fitted with a trunk taken up through the flat concrete roof and terminating in an archimedean cowl. The portholes in the front wall of the operating box are glazed and fitted with metal drop shutters, operated by lever. The drop shutters are also connected to a thin wire cable running to the haystack type lantern light, which must be provided of ample size in the roof. The cable is fitted with a fusible link over each machine so that on the parting of the link in the event of fire the shutters are immediately lowered. On the wall in front of the machines are the press button controls for the decorative lighting of the auditorium and the curtains on the stage.

Adjoining the operating box is the rewind room fitted with bench, film rack and containers. Curiously enough, although there has been a striking advance made in the projector machines themselves, it is still found expedient to rewind the films by hand. A haystack type lantern and fusible link gear is also fitted in this room.

The remaining rooms of the operating box suite comprise a large switch room, say of 200 ft. super floor area, housing the distributing boards, dimmers, switchgear in connection with the

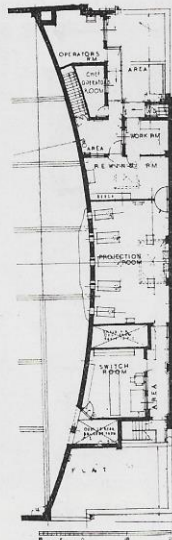
auditorium lighting, mercury arc rectifiers and transformers providing the electrical current to the projectors; operators' room, with toilet accommodation, workshop and store. The entrance both to the operating box and the rewind room must be from the outside air, if necessary open areas being planned in order to comply with this regulation.

PROJECTORS AND SOUND EQUIPMENT

The "sound on film" system now in use has the sound accompaniment

recorded on the edge of the film in terms of light and shade. The projection apparatus, therefore, consists of, A, a projector arc and lens system with the necessary mechanical apparatus to project the picture on the screen; and, B, photo electric cells and amplifiers whereby the light and shade on the sound track of the film is converted into electrical impulses, and then conveyed, through the amplifiers, to the powerful loud speakers installed behind the picture screen, placed there in order to convey the illusion of the sound proceeding from the screen characters.

[Continued on page 55]



Projection room suite. Alternate means of escape must be provided from the projection room and from the rewind room. If necessary open areas must be planned to comply with this regulation.

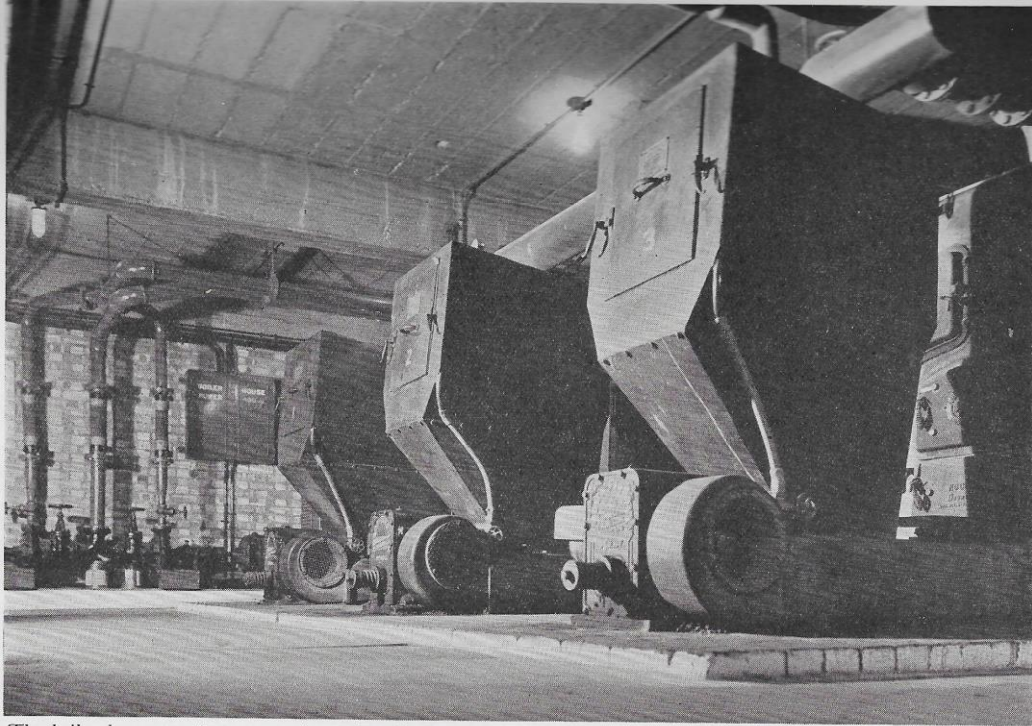


The projection room must be of sufficient size to accommodate at least two machines and should be planned on the centre axis of the cinema. On the left of the photograph is the talkie apparatus.

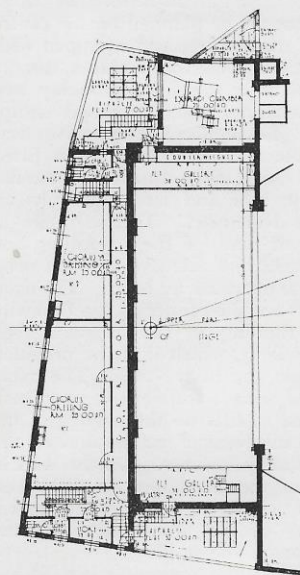
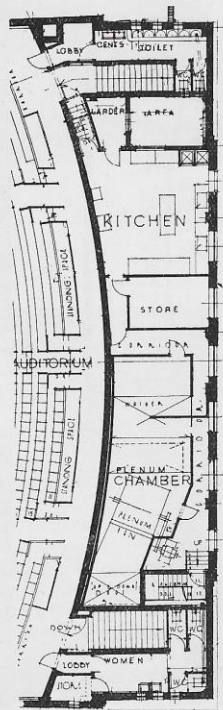
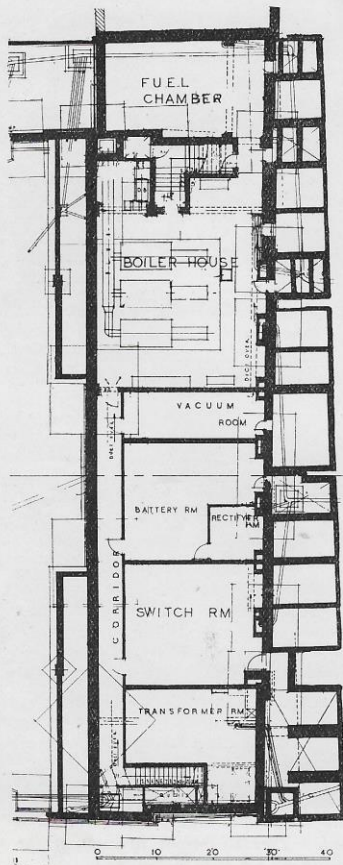


In the rewind room it is still found expedient to rewind films by hand. This is curious in view of the striking advances made in the projector machines.

CINEMA EQUIPMENT 1936

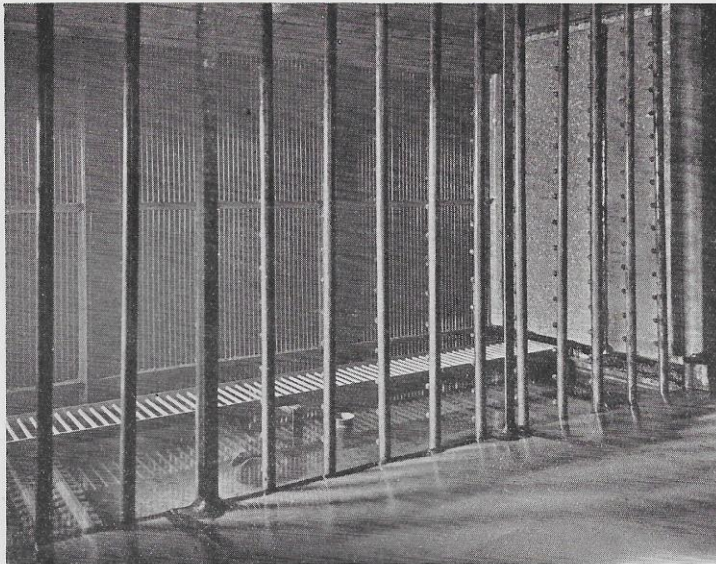


The boiler house usually accommodates three hot water circulating boilers, domestic hot water supply boiler, incinerator, circulating pumps, and electrical starting gear.

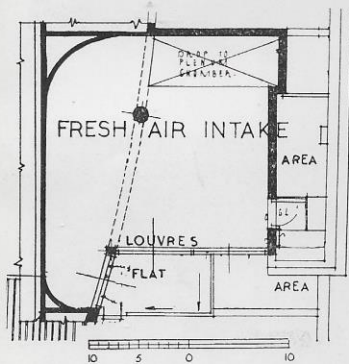


Plans of the accommodation for warming and ventilation. In this case the boiler house is in the basement, the plenum chamber on the third floor, both units being planned in the south—the main—front of the cinema. The extract chamber above the property room at the stage end—the opposite end of the building—contains the centrifugal fan, which extracts approximately 75 per cent. of the air to ensure a balanced plenum system.

CINEMA EQUIPMENT 1936



In the air washer the air is drawn from the back, through a series of banks of fine water sprays into the chamber shown and over the ceiling. It is then forced through the gilled type heaters and into the theatre at convenient points.

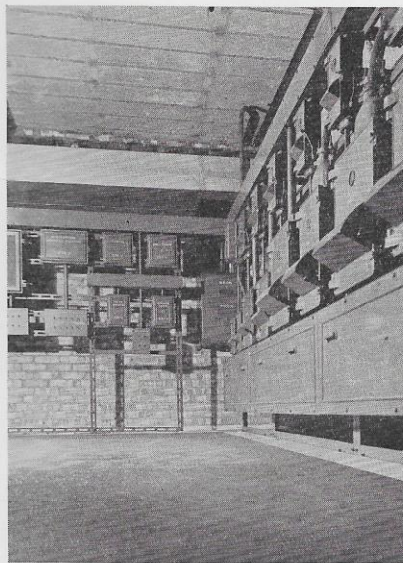


The fresh air intake, planned in the roof at the front of the building. As its name implies, it is from here that fresh air is drawn into the cinema at the rate of 1,000 cubic ft. per person per hour.

The light source universally used for cinematograph projection is the carbon arc, which at present can only be efficiently operated from a direct current supply at a voltage of approximately 100; hence the necessity for the provision of motor generators, or the more modern mercury vapour rectifier, in order to convert the alternating current supply, usually available, to direct current at the correct voltage.

WARMING AND VENTILATING.

Warming and ventilating necessitates the provision of a boiler house, plenum



Part of the main switchboard in the large intake switch room.

chamber and extract fan chamber. The boiler house is usually planned in the basement of sufficient size to accommodate three hot-water circulating boilers, domestic h.w. supply boiler, incinerator, circulating pumps, and the necessary electrical starting gear, with, say, a ten-ton capacity solid fuel store adjoining. It is very economical and satisfactory to equip the boilers with underfeed mechanical stokers as this permits of the use of small, cheap coal. Except for the occasional filling of the hoppers the stokers are entirely automatic in action, and can be thermo-

statically controlled from points in the auditorium when any desired set temperature is reached.

The plenum chamber is planned in the most convenient position to take the supply of fresh air, and houses the large centrifugal intake fan and motor, washer plant, circulating pumps, preheaters, etc. The fresh air is drawn through a series of banks of fine water sprays to extract the impurities, then through the gilled type heaters, and passed into the theatre at convenient points through sheet metal or builders' ducts at the rate of 1,000 cu. ft. per person per hour in the auditorium, and at the rate of four changes per hour to the vestibules, foyers and café. Staircases, toilets, stage, dressing rooms, staff rooms, etc., are heated by radiators.

The extract chamber is usually placed at the stage end. It houses the centrifugal fan the duty of which it is to extract the equivalent of approximately 75 per cent. of the volume of air forced into the building by the inlet fan to ensure a balanced plenum system. In a cinema equipped with a stage and fireproof curtain two-thirds of the vitiated air is extracted from a position immediately in front of the proscenium, together with a separate extract from the stage itself. Broadly speaking this means in practice that the fresh-air inlet grilles are placed at the back and sides of the auditorium, and the extract grilles in front of the proscenium. This very necessary provision for the changing of the air often proves a thorn in the architect's side when designing the interior decoration. How many of the general public realize that this adjunct to their comfort and health incurs an expenditure of from six to eight thousand pounds?

ELECTRICAL

The modern super cinema with its resplendent lighting schemes entails a considerable amount of equipment, which must be housed properly. The main accommodation is usually planned in the basement under the entrance vestibule and comprises a transformer chamber (in the event of the supply being H.T.) with direct access from the street for the supply company, a large intake switch room for the main switchboards, etc., and a battery room equipped with storage batteries to give an independent supply to the maintained safety lighting points, thus enabling the public to leave the premises without panic should there be a failure in the main supply. The batteries are kept constantly charged by a rectifier, housed in a separate compartment off the battery room.

A subsidiary switch room should be provided adjacent to the entrance vestibule, where the board controlling the lighting in the front of the cinema

CINEMA EQUIPMENT 1936

can be installed. When there is a fully equipped stage the cables are run from the main intake switch room to a chamber under the stage in which the gear and contactor panel dealing with the stage lighting is installed. The elaborate stage switchboard is installed either on the stage or more conveniently on a platform or electrician's perch, about 10 ft. above the stage floor. Thus the installation is split up into three main sections, auditorium lighting (controlled from the operating box), front of house lighting and stage lighting.

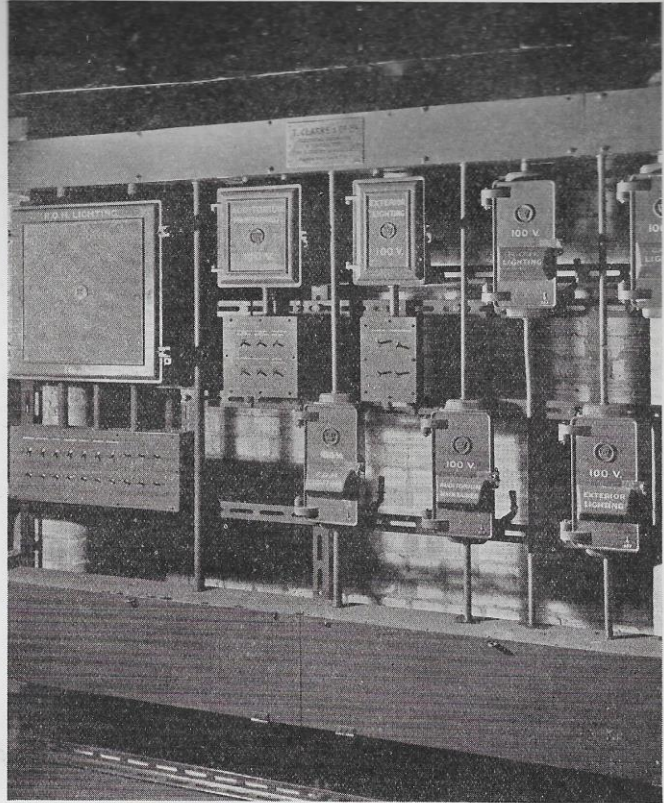
ELECTRICAL FITTINGS

These should be designed *en suite* with the decorative scheme, and provision should be made for relamping and the cleaning of glass, the large fittings in the auditorium being suspended from a winch so that they can be lowered to the floor for this purpose. Where concealed cornice lighting is employed it is essential that access should be provided for relamping from the back.

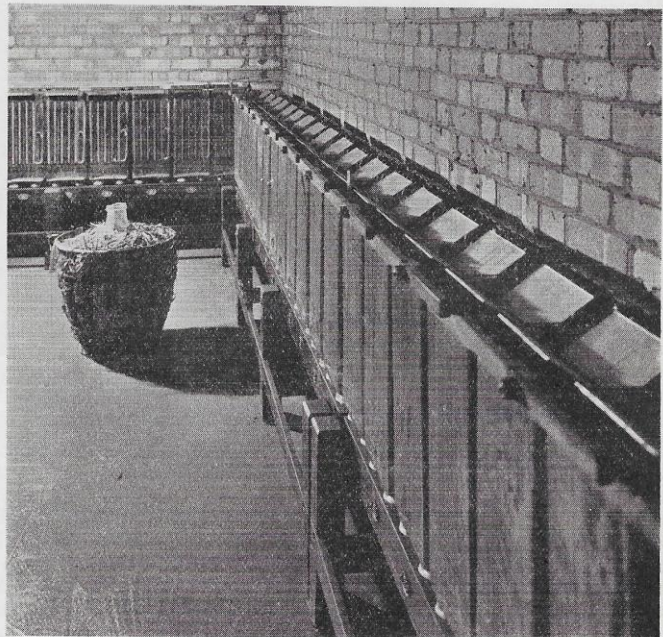
STAGE AND SCREEN

In the development of the modern super cinema there has been a tendency to provide for elaborate stage presentations by installing a fully equipped stage of a depth of about 30 ft. with ample off stage room each side of the proscenium and a height of about 65 ft. to allow for the flying of the scenery, etc. The fly platforms on each side extend the full depth of the stage, but where the scenery is counterweighted these are not strictly essential, their original use being primarily for the tying off of the hand lines, etc.

The grid, as its name implies, is virtually a battened platform about 60 ft. above the stage level, nowadays preferably constructed of steel. The lines carrying the scenery, etc., consist of horizontal barrels suspended from three or four wire ropes which run over grooved sheaves, fixed on the grid, and connected to counterweights running in frames on the side wall. The screen and the talkie horns are both counterweighted, so that they can be taken up out of the way for stage presentations. In order to compensate for the somewhat shallow depth of the stage compared with that of a legitimate theatre a cyclorama is sometimes installed, of a permanent type consisting of a plastered surface of the rear wall or of a cloth type, running on a shaped overhead track. The float front, or footlights, as they are more popularly termed, consists of a concrete trough running the full width of the

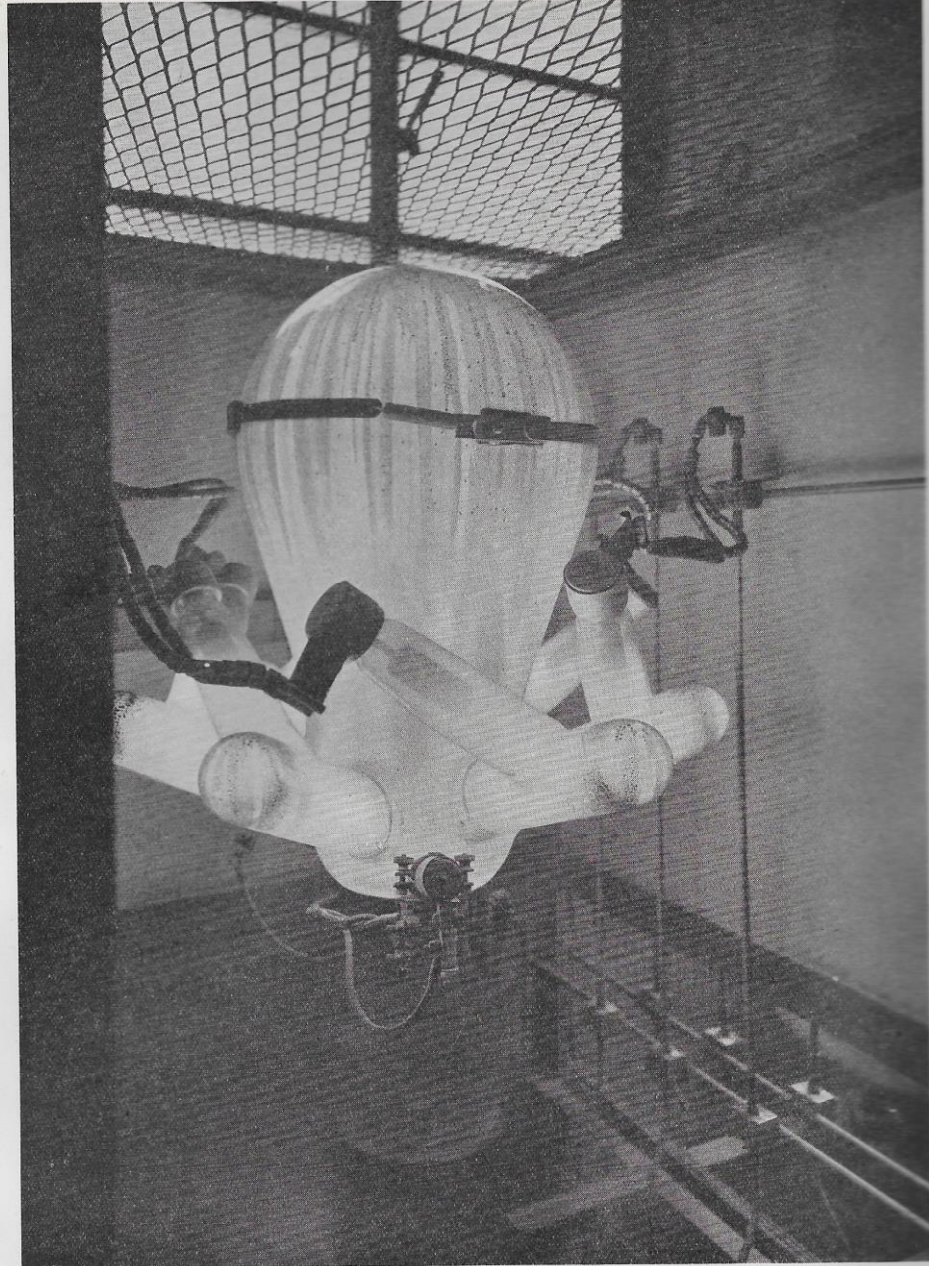


The subsidiary switchboard.



Storage batteries for the independent electric light supply. They are kept constantly charged by a rectifier, housed in a separate compartment. Their purpose is to provide an independent electric light supply in case of a breakdown in the main supply.

CINEMA EQUIPMENT 1936



One of the two rectifiers. It charges the batteries used for the operation of the projecting machines and talkie apparatus; the other, the batteries for the independent electric light supply.

proscenium, in which battens are placed, using three or four different colours, the blending of which provides a comprehensive range of coloured lighting effects.

Stage amplification, where employed, can be either a portable stand microphone or microphones concealed in the footlights, wired to a mixing panel, much on the same principle as the more famous B.B.C. dramatic control panel, wherein the various microphone inputs are blended as desired and then passed to a main amplifier, thence to loud speakers concealed in or about the proscenium front. In cinemas where the stage spots are operated from the operating box an additional

monitor speaker is often installed in the box itself, so that the operator can follow the stage programme.

"Deaf" installations, such as the Ardent used at Chelsea, consist of a microphone placed near the main speakers behind the screen and wired back in parallel to plug-in sockets in the seats at different parts of the house. Ear phone sets are usually available free of charge.

FIREPROOF CURTAINS

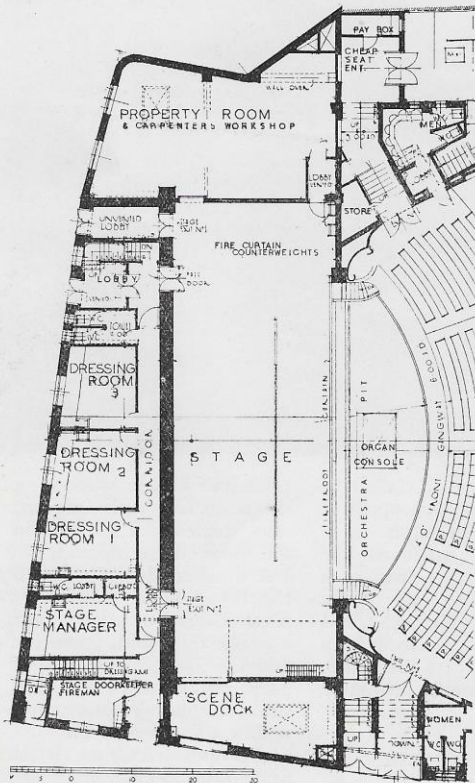
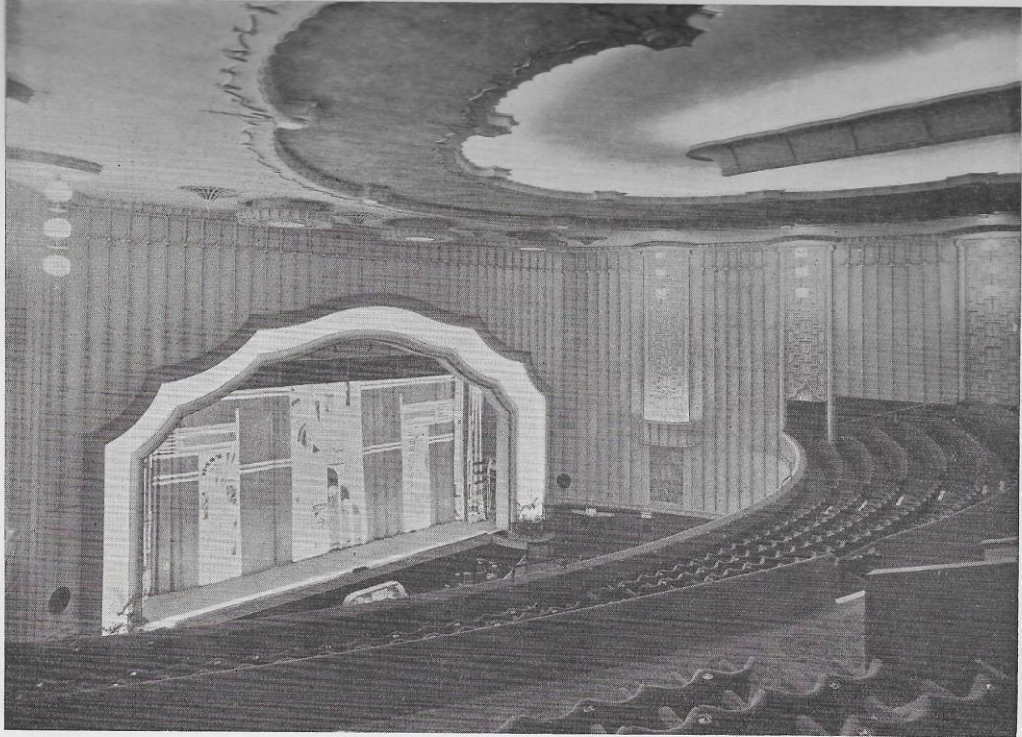
The fireproof curtain separating the stage from the auditorium is constructed of braced steel to form a rigid frame. It is lined on the auditorium side with

brass wire woven asbestos cloth and on the stage side with 16-gauge flattened steel plates. The curtain overlaps the proscenium opening by at least 1 ft. 6 ins. at the sides and the top, the top being fitted with an overlapping plate covered in asbestos cloth to form a smoke tight joint when the curtain is down.

The curtain rises and falls in rolled steel channel guides, carried up to within a few feet of the curtain travel, and is operated by an electrical winch, fitted with an emergency hand control, connected to a centre hauling wire rope. In addition there are two ropes fitted with independent sets of counterweights. The descent of the curtain is

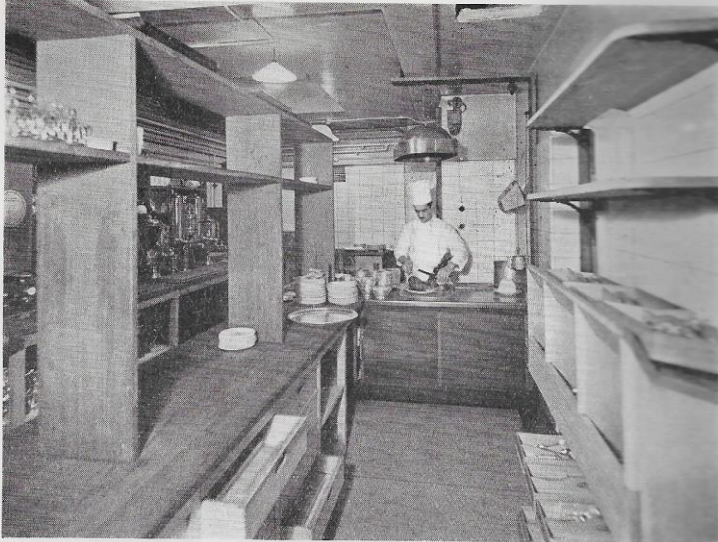
(Continued on p. 33)

CINEMA EQUIPMENT 1936



A photograph of the proscenium at the Gaumont Palace, Chelsea, and a plan of the stage, which is fully equipped for variety turns and musical performances. The stage is about 30 ft. deep and has ample off stage room on either side. The scene dock is provided with steel roller shutters to the stage and to the street. The property room and carpenter's workshop is separated from the stage by a roller shutter. There are ten dressing rooms on two floors.

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The café service. It is connected by a lift on the left to the kitchen above and has two doors on the right leading into the café for the use of the waitresses.

controlled by an automatic compressed air check, and after the release of the hand brake it should descend in no longer than 30 seconds. Two releases are installed, one at the proscenium opening and the other adjacent to the fireman's office off the stage. A curtain drencher pipe is fixed immediately behind the head of the curtain when down and the release placed alongside the curtain release.

DRESSING ROOMS

The dressing rooms are equipped with long benches with towel rail under and mirrors on the walls above; wash hand basins with hot and cold supply, clothes racks and, if possible, wardrobe cupboards.

A scene dock should be provided, with steel roller shutters to the street or passage way and to the stage; and a carpenter's shop also fitted with roller shutter from stage. The shutters in the stage wall should be fitted with quick release gear operated from either side.

STAGE LANTERN

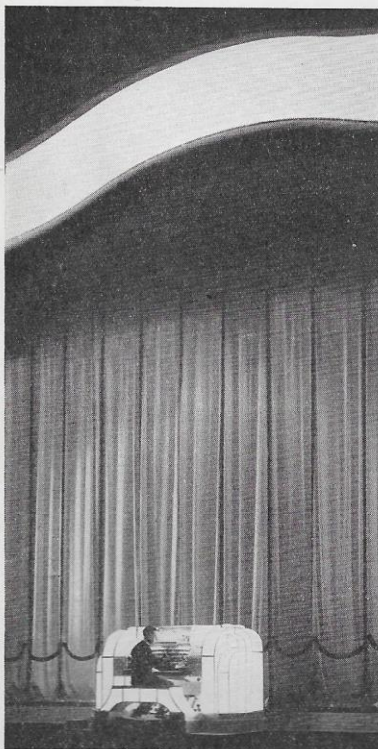
Where a fireproof curtain is installed a haystack type lantern light must be provided in the roof, the opening casements in the sloping sides being of an area equal to a sixth of the floor area of the stage. The casements are fitted with fusible link gearing so that in the event of fire the link parts and the casements fall open. The cable is taken down to stage level and fitted with gearing for manual operation, together with a trip release.

FIRE PROTECTION

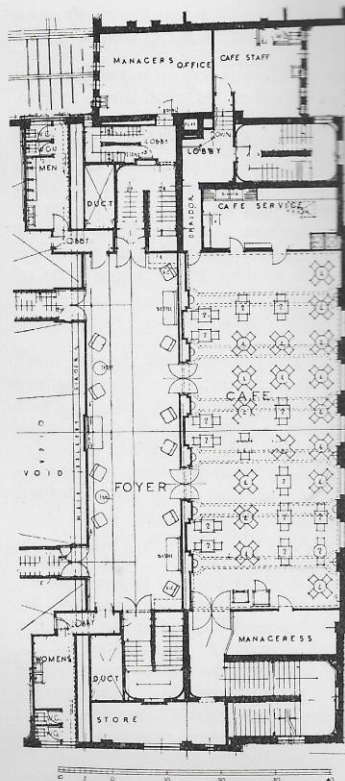
In London and some of the larger provincial towns the regulations call for a sprinkler installation for the stage and possibly for the dressing room block, projection and rewind room; those on the stage being installed on the underside of the grid. Even where not specifically called for by the authorities it is usually advantageous from the insurance point of view to install this protection. Hydrant points, with the requisite length of hose, must also be provided in the auditorium; and portable extinguishers, buckets of sand, and blankets fixed in positions agreed upon with the authorities.

ORGANS

Two chambers—each approximately 16 ft. x 10 ft. x 10 ft.—are required, with blower room on side, provision being made for these either under the stage in the ante proscenium, or immediately over the proscenium. The usual place for the console is in the centre of the orchestra, and it is frequently installed on a lift with press-button control to bring the console up to stage

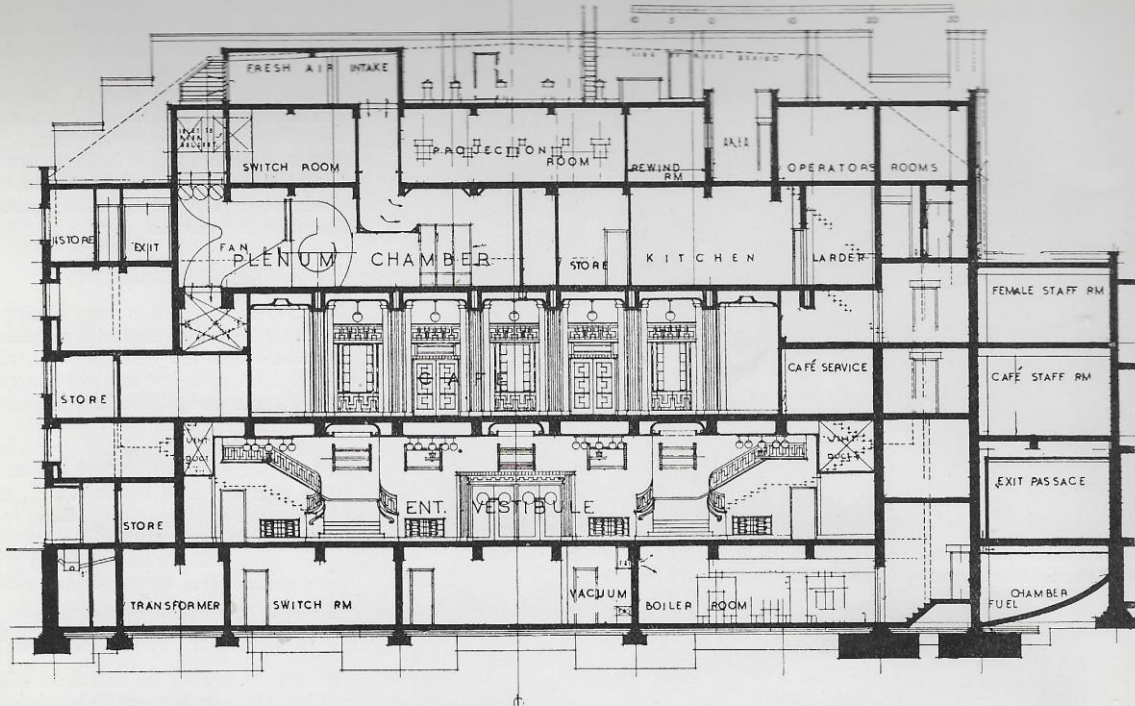


The organ is fitted with glass panels and colour lighting to give special lighting effects under the control of the organist.



Plan of café and the service (shown above). The café is approached from the main entrance to the cinema and by a separate one from the street.

CINEMA EQUIPMENT 1936



Cross section through the Gaumont Palace, Chelsea. All the photographs and plans accompanying this article are of that cinema. Every one of the plans on the previous pages shows, as far as possible, the accommodation required to house one particular branch of the mechanical or other equipment. By the aid of this section it is possible to visualize how the plans of these individual units fit into the cinema as erected.

level for recitals. Quite a number of consoles are now fitted with glass panels and colour lighting to give special lighting effects under the control of the organist.

HEATING AND CARPETS

The provision of a well-sprung, comfortable seat in even the cheapest parts of the house has no doubt contributed largely to the popularity of the large cinema as we know it today. Care, however, must be taken to see that the comfort of the seat itself is not negated by the too close spacing of the rows to give insufficient leg room. A minimum of 2 ft. 6 ins. back to back should be allowed for the cheaper seats, 2 ft. 8 ins. to 2 ft. 9 ins. for the medium priced, and 3 ft. for the highest prices; and not less than 20 ins. centre to centre of arms. The blocks of seats must be arranged so that no seat is more than 10 ft. from a gangway and that there is a clearance of at least 12 ins. between the rows when the seats are up. It is advisable not to close carpet the floor under the seats. A runner between the seats will be found more convenient when the question of repairs or renewals arises.

PAY BOXES

These are usually situated in the inner entrance vestibule. They can be of the portable or built-in type and be so arranged in a convenient position to serve both the stalls and the circle

entrances. They are equipped with either hand operated or electrical three-to five-way ticket machines, complete with till, wired up with controls to the illuminated electrical seat indicator boards, and fitted with either a telephone or a microphone set connected to points in the auditorium so that advice can be given of the number of seats available from time to time and control kept of the issue of tickets.

PUBLICITY

It is most important for the architect to provide for publicity when designing both the façades and the interior decoration. Actual requirements vary considerably. On the façade publicity is secured by neon lighting, either outlining the building or by some applied design, neon interchange letter sign announcing the current programme, interchange letters on the canopy fascia, and glazed metal poster frames, usually of six sheet size (90 ins. by 40 ins.), recessed flush with the building face and adequately illuminated.

Inside the cinema announcements of current programme and next week's attractions are made by means of glazed poster frames, streamer frames, and special display panels.

The transformers in connection with the neon lighting installation are preferably placed in the open, but if found necessary to instal in a room inside the building, the room itself must be adequately ventilated direct to the out-

side air as in the event of a transformer burning out, the smoke might filter into the public parts of the building. It can usually be found convenient to house them on the flat roof immediately behind the parapet out of view. The number of transformers necessary naturally vary with the size of the tube and colour, but on a rough average one is required for every 12 to 20 feet length of tubing. A fireman's switch must be installed in an accessible position so that the H.T. supply can be cut off in the event of fire.

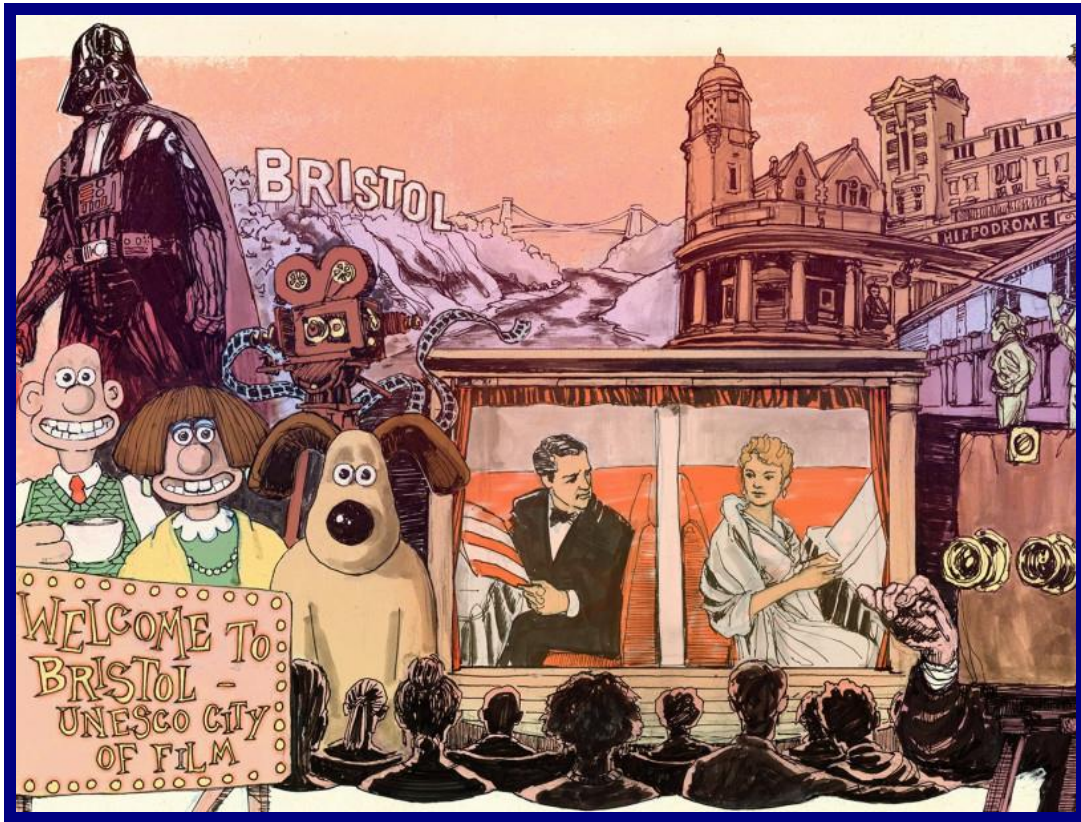
CAFÉ

The café should be planned if possible with a separate and additional entrance from the street. Supplementary rooms are a large kitchen service, equipped with cooking range, bain marie, steamer, griller, toaster, stockpot stove, carving table, hot closet, sinks and draining boards, plate racks, cutlery bins, etc.; larder and vegetable store, manageress's room off café and staff rooms for kitchen and café.

VACUUM PLANT

The exhauster plant and motor should be planned if possible near boiler house. From here wrought iron piping is run to various points in the building terminating with gun metal hose connections. The accessories consist of lengths of hose with swivelling carpet cleaning tools, upholstery tools, brushes, etc.

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