The Carlton Theatre [Frank Verity, 1927] in London’s Haymarket is believed to be as the first fully air conditioned cinema in Britain. The Carlton was designed for use either as a cinema, or as a live theatre (1159 seats). It opened with a stage production, but began showing silent films in March 1928. In 1929 it was wired for sound and became a cinema permanently. The Carrier centrifugal refrigeration machine (above) is stated as being the fourth to be installed in Britain.
Carrier installed air conditioning in London’s Empire [Thomas Lamb with the Practice of the late Frank Matcham, 1928] in Leicester Square. Owned by Jury-Metro-Goldwyn (later MGM) the Empire super-cinema was built on the site of the Empire Music Hall which in 1896 had served as home to the moving pictures of Lumière’s Cinématographe. Lamb’s design for the facade was said to be based on his Albee cinema in Cincinnati while the lobby echoed his design for the air conditioned Capitol Theatre of 1920 in New York City. The original auditorium (3226 seats) was the largest of any in London’s West End. Luxuriously decorated throughout in High Renaissance style, it came complete with a Wurlitzer organ and an elevating orchestra pit. The centrifugal refrigerating machine had “a capacity of 250 ice-melting tons (880 kW)”

A major London cinema, The Warner [Edward a Stone & T R Somerford, 1938] was opened in, Leicester Square. Built on the site of the famous Daly’s Theatre, the striking frontage was faced in marble blocks with sculptured figures representing sight and sound placed high on the facade at either end. The design of the auditorium (1789 seats) was described as simple, with the side walls and the front of the circle covered with an acoustic quilting to absorb sound.
Air conditioning was provided by a Carrier system using a chilled water spray washer.
Centrifugal fan set