

**PLACES OF ENTERTAINMENT  
IN EDINBURGH**

**Part 2**

**TOLLCROSS  
FOUNTAINBRIDGE  
and LOTHIAN ROAD**

**Compiled from  
Edinburgh Theatres, Cinemas and Circuses  
1820 - 1963  
by George Baird**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>THE CASTLE TERRACE SITE</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Edinburgh Theatre, Castle Terrace, 1875-1877; building bought by United Presbyterian Church, and named Synod Hall, 1877; Synod Hall bought by Edinburgh Corporation, 1902; Oldest Synod Hall tenant, Edinburgh Geological Society, 1885; The start of Poole's in the Synod Hall; Myriorama shows, 1928; Harmony Nights, 1928; Poole's became permanent tenants of the Synod Hall, 1929; The Talkies, 1929; John Poole on Early Cinema Days; How Talkies Came To Town; Poole's pioneer work on the Talkies; J.K. Stafford Poole on How Things Have Changed Since the Myriorama; Poole's, Synod Hall, closed in 1965; The Castle Terrace Site occupied by the Saltire Court, an office block, in October 1991</i>	
<b>LYCEUM THEATRE, GRINDLAY STREET</b>	<b>16</b>
<i>How the area lying to the east of Lothian Road was transformed in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century; Article on the new Lyceum Theatre; Opening of Lyceum Theatre on 10 September 1883, with Irving and Terry appearing in "Much Ado About Nothing"; Moving Pictures in the Lyceum, 1912; Benefit performances for the "Titanic" widows and orphans, 1912; Eva Moore, Christmas 1915; Royal Visits: King George V, 1931; Queen Elizabeth, 1955; King Olav of Norway, 1962; Reconstruction Scheme, 1935; Proposed development of Lyceum Theatre-Castle Terrace site, early 1960's.</i>	
<b>KING'S THEATRE, LEVEN STREET</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>Ground for Theatre obtained from Thomas J. Malcolmson, grocer, 1905; King's Theatre opened on 8 December 1906; Two houses nightly from 1911; Theatre acquired by A Stewart Cruickshanks, 1928; King's Theatre not to be a cinema, 1936; Bertha Cassie, Only Female Switchboard Operator in Edinburgh, 1917-1937; Canopy changed at Main Entrance, 1950; Alterations to theatre seating, 1951; Memories of George Trotter, King's carpenter, 1906-1953; 1963; 60 more seats for the King's, 1963</i>	
<b>GROVE STREET THEATRES , 1897-1921</b>	<b>31</b>
<i>NewPavilion Theatre opened 15 February 1897, later entitled "Pavilion Theatre"; Moving Pictures shown in Pavilion Theatre, the "Piv", 1902; Prince of Wales Theatre of Varieties, opened 12 March 1906; Alhambra Theatre of Varieties, opened 1 October 1906; Pringle's Picture Palace opened 16 October 1908; Garrick Theatre opened 31 December 1917; Entertainment Tax introduced during 1914-18 War; Garrick Theatre destroyed by fire 4 June 1921; Martin's Bakery on the old Theatre Site.</i>	
<b>FOUR HALLS</b>	<b>35</b>
<i>Central Hall -The West End Mission Services in The Albert Hall and Synod Hall, 1888-1901; Central Hall, Tollcross, opened 1901; First Cinematograph Show in Central Hall, 1901; Problems posed by an outside exhibitor, 1907; New Year Concert and Cinematograph, 1912; Author's memories of singing in the Central Hall Choir, 1910 to 1915, and of the Rev. Frank Benson; Popular Saturday Night Concerts.</i>	

*Usher Hall – Donation by Andrew Usher; Cost; Opened by Mrs Andrew Usher, 6 March 1914.*

*Billiard Halls: Queen’s, Thornybauk; Trevelyan, Fountainbridge.*

**THE STORY OF COOKE’S CIRCUS IN EDINBURGH 1835 – 1911** **40**

*Meeting with Cora Ledingham, grand-daughter of John Henry Cooke, 1963; Article on John Henry Cooke’s notable career, 1917; Cooke’s Circus, Lothian Road, 1835; Cooke’s Equestrian Palace, Grindlay Street, 1877 – 1883; Itinerary undertaken in 1881; Cooke’s Royal Circus, Fountainbridge, 1886; One of Cooke’s last programmes, 1910; Circus closed on 11 February 1911; Princes Street Memorial Seat to John Henry Cooke, 1836-1917.*

**CIRCUSES, SHOWGROUNDS AND SKATING RINKS** **47**

*Edmond’s (late Wombwell’s), Grassmarket, 1881; Bostock and Wombwell’s, Grassmarket, 1891; Bostock’s Menagerie, Grassmarket, 1894; Showground, Gibson Terrace, 1900; Bostock and Wombwell’s Menagerie, Grassmarket, 1902; Article on Grassmarket by Councillor Wilson McLaren; Royal Italian Circus, Fountainbridge, 1907; Evan’s Carnival, Ponton Street, 1911; Bostock and Wombwell’s, Fountainbridge, 1912; Pinder’s, Palladium Royal Circus, Fountainbridge, 1932; Showground, Gardener’s Crescent.*

*Lochrin Ice Pond, Tollcross, 1912; The Grand Rink, West Fountainbridge, 1909 (later the Coliseum Picture House).*

**EAST FOUNTAINBRIDGE SITE** **52**

*Cooke’s Circus 1886-1911; Cooke’s Circus Picture Palace, 1908; Palladium Picture House, 1912; Palladium Theatre, 1933.*

**CINEMAS** **56**

*Blue Halls, 1930 –Beverley, 1954; Caley, 1930; Central Hall, 1901; Coliseum, 1911; Cooke’s Picture Palace, 1908 - Palladium Picture House, 1912; King’s Cinema, 1914 – Cameo, 1949; Lauriston Hall, 1912; Poole’s, Synod Hall, 1906; Pringle’s Picture Palace, Grove Street, 1908; Regal, 1938; Rutland, 1930 – Gaumont, 1950; Tollcross, 1912; Old Church, West Port, 1901.*

**INDEX** **76**

## FOREWORD

After Frances Watt of Nicolson Square Methodist Church had read my father's book *Edinburgh Theatres, Cinemas and Circuses 1820-1963*, she approached me to give a talk about places of entertainment in the South Side to the Epworth Group of her church. While preparing the material for the talk I was seized with the idea of producing compact books for some of the localities in Edinburgh. Naturally, my first effort was about The South Side. This book, Part 2, deals with Tollcross and its environs. I spent my formative years there, 1935-1950; and it has unforgettable memories for me. Part 3 will deal with Leith and Part 4 with Portobello.

In 1959 my father, **George Baird, 1893-1967**, conceived the idea of writing the History. His primary aim was to report the emergence of 'houses of entertainment', by quoting the first advertisement relating to the **opening** of the theatre or cinema; its address; the price of admission; and what was being presented for the entertainment of *Edinburry* folk. The main sources for doing this were: *The Scotsman*, *Edinburgh Evening News*, *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, *Edinburgh Courant*, *Leith Burghs Pilot*, *Leith Port Annual*; Window Bills, handbills, held by the Edinburgh Room and the National Library; and the 1915 and 1954 *Kinematograph Year books*. Background information was included where he thought it would be of interest to the reader. His sources for this were J.C.Dibdin's *Annals of the Edinburgh Stage*; James Grant's *Old and New Edinburgh*; Councillor Wilson McLaren's Reminiscences, as given in the *Edinburgh Evening News*; and *Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century*.

He started work on the History in October 1959 and from the outset received practical support from the City Librarian, Mr. C. M. Minto, and the staff of the Edinburgh Room. He acknowledged the help of Librarians thus, "Facts and Diamonds have this in common – one must dig for them in their respective habitats. In this case facts are to be found in Libraries. That, however, is not the whole story, for, without the skilled Librarian to help, one would be like a traveller trying to cross a desert with no knowledge of map-reading, nor of navigation. My grateful thanks to the many Librarians who have assisted me over the years in my search for facts of a historical character."

In 1964 he completed his research into the opening of 70 theatres, 120 cinemas, 40 circuses and 22 skating rinks, ice and roller. It was a tragedy that as he was nearing the completion of the History he fell ill in the Spring of 1964; as a consequence he was unable to compose a foreword to the History. Two copies of the History were produced by typewriter: the top copy is held by the Edinburgh Room, I have the carbon copy.

With a view to making the History available to a wider readership, I decided to re-set the History in *Word 97*, in A4 format. Keying the 180,000 words made me realise the enormous task undertaken by my father in transcribing most of the text from source material. I completed the A4 version of the History in July 2000.

The material in this book is drawn from Chapters: 10, 11, 15, 16, 19, 21, 24, 28,30, 32 and 33 of the History. References to sources of information have been abbreviated by using the following conventions- **S:** *The Scotsman*; **WS:** *The Weekly Scotsman*; **EN:** *Edinburgh Evening News*; **ED:** *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*; **EC:** *Edinburgh Courant*.

My personal comments are shown in square brackets [ ].

George F. Baird  
October 2001

## THE CASTLE TERRACE SITE

### **Proposed West End Theatre for Edinburgh (S Thursday, 17 December 1874)**

The commentator observed that while Edinburgh's wealth and population were increasing rapidly, there had been no equivalent development to meet the demand 'for means of amusement and recreation.' The principal theatre was at the east end of the city (*Theatre Royal, Broughton Street*), but was thought to be 'no means sufficient for the community as now existing.' It was, therefore, not surprising that some influential people had selected a site, 300 feet by 150 feet, in the centre of Castle Terrace, for the building of a theatre 'conveniently situated for the growing population of the western and southern districts of Edinburgh, being readily accessible to the whole West End, but is in immediate communication with Princes' Street and Lothian Road, and so with the main routes of traffic.' It was understood that 'the new theatre would have an aquarium, and a winter garden which might be used for horticultural and other exhibitions, and also a great music hall, which would be available for concerts or other similar entertainments.'

### ***EDINBURGH THEATRE, CASTLE TERRACE* (S Thursday 16 December 1875 and Monday 20 December 1875)**

"Will Open for the Season Tonight (Monday) 20<sup>th</sup> December 1875.

Numerous and Talented Company. The respected Lessee of the late Theatre Royal and very Popular Actor, Mr R.H. Wyndham, will appear in one of his favourite characters.

At Half-past Seven, the Entertainments will commence with *God Save the Queen*, sung by the Company. An Opening Address by Mr Wybert Reeve. To be followed by the Admired Comedy, *Used Up*, after which the Laughable Farce *Last Legs. O'CALLAGHAN*.... Mr R.H. Wyndham. Concluding with the Farce of *Brother Sandy*."

On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday December 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>, Shakespeare's Beautiful Comedy of *AS YOU LIKE IT*. In which... Mr Compton and Mr and Mrs Chippendale will appear. To be followed by the Farce *Cool as Cucumber*. Plumper ....Mr Wybert Reeve. Doors open at 7, to Commence at 7.30. Box Office at Messrs. Wood & Co., 49 George Street."

***Edinburgh Theatre ( S Monday, 20 December 1875.)***

“Prices: Stalls, 5s.; Dress Circle, 4s.; Upper Circle, 3s.; Pit Stalls, 2s.6d.; Pit, 1s.6d.; Amphitheatre, 1s.; and Gallery, 6d. Proscenium Private Boxes, from £1.1s.0d. to £2.2s.0d. Private Boxes in Dress Circle, from 16s. to £1.10s.0d.

**No smoking allowed**

N.B. Arrangements have been made to have Tramway Cars for Leith, Morningside and Newington, in waiting at North (Princes’ Street) end of Castle Terrace at the Close of the Performance each evening.”

**The Edinburgh Theatre, December 20<sup>th</sup> 1875 to April 14<sup>th</sup> 1877 (*Dibdin* page 489)**

“...On Monday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1877, Mr **Stirling** announced a twelve nights engagement, and with the last performance on Saturday, April 14<sup>th</sup> 1877 (*Masks and Faces*), the history of this splendidly equipped theatre comes to a close.

The building was shortly afterwards exposed for sale by public roup, and eventually knocked down to a dissenting body of Scottish Presbyterians, who paid about one fourth of the original cost. The entire fittings, furniture, etc., were sold off by auction, and, in the process of time, the place after an extensive process of rebuilding, was opened as a

**Synod Hall and Offices of the United Presbyterian Church”**

**Extract from City Records**, supplied by Miss H. Armet, City Archivist

“The **Edinburgh Theatre**, or ***West End Theatre***, CastleTerrace, built in the year 1875, at a cost of £65,000. It was purchased on the failure of the Company by the **United Presbyterian Church** in 1877 for approximately £16,300”

**1960-1961 *City of Edinburgh Financial Review***, extract from page 183

“***Synod Hall*** The Synod Hall Buildings, originally used as an opera house, and situated in Castle Terrace, were acquired by the Corporation in 1902 from the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland at a cost of £30,570. These buildings consist of a large hall (Synod Hall) which is seated for 1,450, a smaller hall (Pillar Hall) with a seating capacity of 400, a number of rooms which are let as offices, studios, etc., and two basements occupied as a Winter Bowling Green and a Miniature Rifle Range.”

It will be seen the Churchmen of yesteryear were “Slick Guys” both in the purchase of and in the selling of the Synod Hall. A Profit, both fore and aft.



**Oldest Synod Hall Tenant, 1885** The **Royal Scottish Geographical Society**, 10 Randolph Crescent, Edinburgh 3, confirmed in March 1963 that “The Large Hall in the Synod Hall was first used by the Society for lectures in **1885**.” ...“So far as I can trace, the *Usher Hall* was first used for lectures in **1919**. From **1919 to 1941** some were held in the Usher Hall and some in the Synod Hall; from **1942** all lectures were held in the Usher Hall.” The reason for introducing data anent the Geographical Society is: when Messrs Poole became tenants of the Large Hall (Synod Hall) they had, by the terms of the let, to vacate the premises one night each quarter, between Monday and Friday. This meant a loss of revenue to Messrs Poole four nights in the year and disappointment to numerous patrons who arrived at the Synod Hall only to find that there was no picture show on that particular evening. I was disappointed several times.

### **First Entertainments in the Synod Hall**

Who were the first entertainers in the Synod Hall has been a sore point in Edinburgh down through the ages. Some highlights are given below on this subject from **1900** culled from the *Evening News* files, held in the National Library of Scotland.

N Monday, 31 December **1900** “*Synod Hall, Castle Terrace* Fisk Jubilee Singers and Animated War Pictures from China and South Africa”

N Thursday 2 January **1902** “*Synod Hall* Fisk Jubilee Singers and Animated Pictures Prices: 6d.; 1s.; and 2s.”

### **The start of Poole’s in the Synod Hall**

**CHARLES W POOLE’S MYRIORAMA** (N Saturday 22 December **1906** Preliminary Advertisement N Tuesday, and 25 December **1906**). Last two performances were on 19 January **1907**.

“Synod Hall, Edinburgh Today, Tuesday, at 2.30 and 7.45 Three performances New Year’s Day, 11.30, 2.30, 7.45 Book at Paterson’s, George Street

First Visit of Charles W. Poole’s Myriorama. To the Myriorama is allied Poole’s Company of Entertainers: Woolford’s Ponies; Clever Dogs and Donkeys; and the famous Avondale Four, Comedy Vocalists of Wonderful Humorous Ability. The Whole Accompanied by Poole’s Scarlet Band. Please Note. This is no ordinary Picture Entertainment. Guaranteed 50 people in Company. Established 1837 Now Greater, Grander And Better Than Ever”

N Tuesday, 1 January **1907**. “Opening show ... There are also a number of of interesting cinematograph films and a first class variety programme.”

Note: The following anecdote throws some light on Poole’s First Synod Hall Show. On October 22<sup>nd</sup> **1962** I paid a visit to Mr J.K.Stafford Poole at his Synod Hall office. I was shown a photograph which carried the caption:

**“1907 Poole’s Motor Car** Photographed outside the Synod Hall Edinburgh, during the Xmas 1906-1907 season, where they played to 250,000 [somewhat over-stated G.F.B.] people.” The Registration Number of the Motor Car was R62. The car was surrounded by the entire staff including, as it transpired, Poole’s Scarlet Band in uniform. There was nothing in the photograph to indicate that it commemorated Poole’s First Show. It was good fortune to come across the Advertisement of December **1906**, which cleared up the story behind the picture.

***RALPH PRINGLE’S NORTH AMERICAN ANIMATED PICTURE COMPANY*** (N Thursday, 3 October **1907**)

“Synod Hall First Visit of Ralph Pringle’s North American Animated Picture Company. Enormous Attraction for Short Season”

***POOLE’S COLOSSAL NO. 1 MYRIORAMA POPULAR GUIDE – JOHN R. POOLE*** (N Monday, 30 December **1907**) In every sense of the word Mr Poole was ‘colourful’. He was the No. 1 showman in Edinburgh: a good mixer. In time he became a member of the Town Council and later a magistrate. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr Poole on several occasions.

**City has no record of Poole’s first application to rent the Synod Hall** It will be appreciated that every ‘short let’ for the Synod Hall, over a number of years, would not be kept over the proverbial ‘for ever and a day’. Unfortunately, in the two major Wars many City records were pulped to help the War effort. It would, I think, be reasonable to conclude that the above date, December 25<sup>th</sup> **1906**, was when the Corporation first rented the Synod Hall to Messrs. Poole. In a letter from the City Archivist, Miss **H. Armet**, dated 14<sup>th</sup> February **1963**, on this subject, she wrote, *inter alia*, “The Synod Hall was taken over by the Town in **1902** and there is no record there of Poole’s first application to rent the hall. On 30th April **1907**, Mr **J.R.Poole** was given permission to erect a sign outside the building during the tenancy of the Hall at the next Christmas and New Year holidays, and in **1908** allowed the use of the Hall for the purpose of his Myriorama Etc. ”

**“Poole’s Tonight at 8 Prices- 6d. to 3s. Children, Half-price”** (N Thursday, 24 December 1908) Note: this advertisement is given because it was the first Poole advert. intimating admission prices.

***SATURDAY NIGHT CONCERT*** “Synod Hall Saturday at 8 p.m. Stella Carol, Soprano; Fraser Gange, Basso; Dorothy Webster, Contralto; Miss Lilian Foulis, Violinist; Clement Harvey, Pianist”  
Tickets: 2s.6d.; 1s.; and 6d. 1,000 seats at 6d.” (N Friday, 26 January 1912)

N 22 December 1920 “Poole’s, Synod Hall Opens Monday, December 27<sup>th</sup> 1920 For Three Weeks A Fine Panstereorama of Westminster Cathedral, The Unknown Warrior etc Prices: Ordinary Doors Adults: 3s. 6d.; 2s. 4d.; 2s.; 1s 5d.; 9d.  
Children: 1s. 10d.; 1s. 3d.; 1s. 1d.; 9d.; 9d.” It will be noticed that Poole’s were still operating on a Seasonal basis.

***FILM OF BOXING MATCH, 1921*** “Synod Hall, All Week DEMPSEY V CARPENTIER Prices: 1s. and 6d.” (N Monday, 15 August 1921) This was not a Poole’s Advertisement. At no time during my extensive research did Poole’s fail to append their name to an advertisement.

“Pooles’s – Synod Hall For Three Weeks Opens Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup> 1923.

John R. Poole offers the “C.W.” Poole’s 1923-24 Production. Now Luxuriously Reseated and Redecorated” (N Saturday, 22 December 1923) The purpose of showing this is to draw attention to the reseating.

***CATLIN’S PIERROTS*** (N Monday, 16 February 1925) “Synod Hall Catlin’s Pierrots” This item is given to indicate that ‘strangers’ were still invading the Synod Hall in the mid 1920’s. They were, however, virtually the last of their race. Poole’s season was extending, only closing down for a short period during the summer.

***POOLE’S ANNOUNCES OPENING OF A PICTURE SEASON, MONDAY, AUGUST 27<sup>TH</sup> 1928. POOLE’S NEW ORCHESTRA*** (N Thursday, 23 August 1928) “Poole’s New Orchestra of Solo Performers will be under the direction of **Samuel Rodgers**, late Musical Director Theatre Royal Cinema, Manchester, etc. For the 1928-29 Season a New

Proscenium and New Orchestra have been installed, together with new Kinema Machinery and Lighting Effects, the whole costing nearly £1,500” I remember Mr Rodgers; indeed the orchestra was a big attraction.

***POOLE’S SPECIAL NOTICE HARMONY NIGHTS EVERY THURSDAY AND FRIDAY*** (N Saturday, 1 September 1928)  
“Commencing Thursday First, September 6<sup>th</sup>, when the Orchestra will discourse half-an-hour’s Programme of the Latest and Brightest Selections and Novelties.”

***“MONDAY, DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> 1928 FOR TWO WEEKS ONLY POOLE’S MYRIORAMA AND ENTERTAINERS”*** (N Saturday, 15 December 1928)

It will be seen from the News Advertisement of August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1928, that a New Proscenium had been installed. That cast a shadow: namely, in the December 15<sup>th</sup> advertisement that the Myriorama Show would last only two weeks. So, it came at last – Myriorama was on the way out. The greatest feature of the Poole bag of tricks, which had entertained countless thousands, had reached the end of the road. Poole’s never again staged the grand old show – MYRIORAMA. The TALKIES had taken over.

***POOLE’S – SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT*** (N Saturday, 25 May 1929)  
“Mr Poole has arranged for the very latest Sound Equipment to be installed in the Synod Hall in the early autumn at a cost of nearly £6,000, to enable him to present Super Talkies. He has transferred Silent Pictures to May, June and July.

**POOLE’S WILL NOT CLOSE THIS SUMMER”**

These announcements indicated that Messrs Poole and Family had become permanent tenants of the Synod Hall. In any case, J.R.Poole can now step out with the Big Boys in the Cinema Industry. They had **arrived**.

***TALKIE PROGRAMME featuring SPEAKEASY*** (N Monday, 29 July 1929) “Poole’s 2.30 – Continuous – 10.30 100 Per Cent Talkie Programme with the Fox 100 Per cent Dialogue Melodrama *Speakeasy* (Night Club) with Lola Lane and Paul Page. George Bernard Shaw in an Intimate Talk. British Movietone News, the ‘sound’ News Reel. And *The Diplomats*, Talkie Comedy, Time Permitting. The above programme will be for two weeks.

Poole's Orchestra Director, Samuel Rodgers, With 15 Minutes' Harmony at 6.15 & 8.30. No Advance in Prices"

*Poole's pioneer work on The Talkies*

I give below items of interest anent the Poole Family and the early days of Talking Pictures.

**Early Cinema Days by Councillor John R. Poole (S Saturday, 14 January 1939)**

"In proposing the toast of the *Edinburgh Cine Society* at their 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Dinner Mr Robert W. Heriot presided over a company of about 60 in the R.B. Hotel on Friday, January 13<sup>th</sup> 1939.

...Mr Poole said the cinematograph had been invented simultaneously by the **Lumiere Brothers** and Mr **Robert W. Paul** of London. He had known Mr Paul as a boy. Mr Paul's machine was known as the cinematograph. Mr Poole said he had later used the Lumiere machine which was both a camera and a projector. Among the first of the moving pictures, said Mr Poole, was the **Fitzsimmons V Jeffries** fight, and, while he turned the handle he gave a running commentary – from the front of the Circle.

**First Talkies** Continuing, Councillor Poole said, in 1902 came the first talkies. Sound from gramophones was synchronised with the film. Sir **Harry Lauder** singing *I Love A Lassie* was one of the first. As there were no close-ups at the time, synchronisation did not need to be exact.

**Talking films in 1926** Mr Poole referred to the first talking film in 1926. In that year he brought the De Forest- phono-films to Edinburgh. (**Poole's - Synod Hall Introduces "Real Talkies" to Edinburgh.** Concluding his remarks Councillor said, "When he first came to Edinburgh as an exhibitor there were only three or four cinemas. Now (January 1939) there were about forty, with seating accommodation of over 30,000." The film referred to was mentioned in **N Thursday, 3 February 1949** "Poole's is credited with introducing the first "Real Talkies" to Edinburgh named, *Till the Bells Ring*, a *Phonofilm* production commencing Monday October 11<sup>th</sup> 1926. It featured **Graham Moffat's** Company, in a Scots Comedy, and lasted 45 minutes."

**Poole's, Synod Hall Pioneer Work on the Talkies (N Saturday, 28 August 1943 Part 2 of Article)** "...A great pioneer of talking pictures in Edinburgh was Mr **John R. Poole**. Before the advent of **Al Jolson** telling

the world about *Sonny Boy*, the *Synod Hall* had been the scene of many experiments to make the screen live. Frequently Mr Poole engaged good artists to do the singing parts when such were appropriate between his films. One such film of the First World War depicted three Tommies emerging from the debris of a shell burst in which they had been buried. The soldiers began to sing *Keep the Home Fires Burning*, it was a pleasant surprise to hear the words sung, even if they did not all accord with the lip movements. About the same period Mr Poole appeared on the screen and addressed the audience. In the course of his remarks he said, "And next week we shall present **Graham Moffat** and his Company in a *Scrape of the Pen*."

**"Things have changed since Myriorama" Mr J.K. Stafford Poole speaking at a Presentation** (N Friday, 21 July 1961) Mr J.K.S. Poole, director of the company, recalled some of the events which had marked the development of the cinema since the days of Myriorama. The question was posed: 'Does anyone still remember the days when the Myriorama show was the great attraction in Edinburgh; when crowds flocked to Poole's Synod Hall to be held in enthralled amazement as the pictures flashed before their eyes?' Among the first of the talkies which Poole's presented was one called, inaptly, *Speakeasy*. "I doubt if you could hear more than ten words in the whole hour-and-a-half film" said Mr Poole. (Note: I saw *Speakeasy* and it was not nearly as bad as Mr Poole tried to make out.)

**Backroom Boys** In 1928 a young lad named **William Campbell** joined the staff of Poole's and set off on a career in which, to date, July 1961, he has seen more than 35 million feet of film of all kinds. Mr Campbell, now the Head Projectionist at the Cinema, and two other serving employees received gold watches and a cheque to mark their association with the company. Mr **Ramsay Hoggard** joined the Synod Hall staff as a second operator two years after Mr Campbell and when the *Poole's Roxy* opened (Monday December 20<sup>th</sup> 1937) Mr Hoggard was transferred there as chief projectionist.

I don't think the public realise what goes on behind the scenes at a cinema. During their working lives Mr Campbell and Mr Hoggard must each have seen something like 6,700 miles of film' The third member of staff to receive a presentation was Miss **Jean Hull**, who has 23 years' service."

**Main Occupants of Castle Terrace site**

Edinburgh Theatre, 1875 to 1877; United Presbyterian Church 1877 - 1902, when the Corporation bought the premises; from 1906 Poole's was one of the main occupants of the Synod Hall, in 1929 they became permanent tenants and are still there in 1963. [My father added a postscript to his copy of his history " Synod Hall Closed 30<sup>th</sup> October 1965". The Castle Terrace site was demolished during the period 1965-1969. Building of the Saltire Court, an office block, started in 1988 and was completed in October 1991 G.F.B.]

## LYCEUM THEATRE, GRINDLAY STREET

In the island site contained by Lothian Road, Cambridge Street, Castle Terrace, Spittal Street and Grindlay Street, there stands, as I write in May 1963, three of Edinburgh's largest Halls: The *Synod Hall*, Castle Terrace, where the *Edinburgh Theatre* opened on 20 December 1875; the Royal *Lyceum Theatre*, Grindlay Street, opened 10 September 1883; and the *Usher Hall*, Lothian Road, opened on March 6<sup>th</sup> 1914.

In the winter of 1876-1877 *Cooke's Circus* moved from Lothian Road and opened their new circus in Grindlay Street on 24 February 1877. They remained there until 2 February 1883, when they had to vacate the site so that the *Lyceum Theatre* could be built on it; the theatre opened on Monday, 10 September 1883. During its 80 years it has escaped the Fire Bug and, to the best of my remembrance, it has never required a major alteration as had both the *Empire and King's Theatres* respectively in 1927-28 and 1951. It had, however, a £4,000 reconstruction scheme in October 1935.

**LYCEUM THEATRE, GRINDLAY STREET** (S Tuesday, 28 August 1883 Excerpts from preview)

*“The Lyceum Theatre* The new house, under the management of Messrs. Howard and Wyndham, has been about six months in course of construction, and now the interior is ready for inspection of the licensing Justices; for completeness of appointments and convenience of arrangement, it may fairly challenge comparison with any similar establishment in the country. The work of Mr **C. J. Phipps**, London, it embodies the fruits of experience gained in planning nearly forty theatres; the structure has been erected by Messrs. W. & D. McGregor, the cost having been kept down to a figure, within £17,000, which compares favourably with the large expenditure incurred in a former West End theatrical venture. (Note. The reference is to the *Edinburgh Theatre*, Castle Terrace, opened in 1875 at a cost of £65,000.)

The building has been designed in three parts, practically cut off from one another. The auditorium, forms one block; the stage and its appurtenances another, divided from the former by means of a solid brick wall and iron curtain; while the third block, outside the main walls that enclose the other two, is occupied with the dressing- rooms and workshops. A safety feature, in all parts of the house, is the duplication of entrances and exits.



At the north end of the building, the stage has a depth of 44 feet from the footlights to back wall; the width, including a spacious scene dock on the east side, being 78 feet. The height to the gridiron, a framework for supporting scenery, is 60 feet; and there being underneath the floor an available depth of 20 feet; the basement floor is concreted, so as to exclude damp; the carpentry, comprised all the latest improvements in stage machinery. The space under the floor has been used to provide a master carpenter's room, a gas engineer's room and an orchestra room

The iron curtain for closing the proscenium opening, consists of two complete screens of boiler-plate metal, placed eight inches apart; weighs three tons, but is so counterpoised that it could easily be raised or lowered by a single man, in the event of the hydraulic apparatus provided for the purpose getting out of order. In the lighting of the stage, whether with gas or limelight, the management will have every facility for the production of imposing spectacular effects.

In close proximity to the stage, on the Cornwall Street side, are a hand property room and carpenter's shop; and a large property-making room. Over the workshops are 24 dressing-rooms, occupying four floors, with windows to Cornwall Street. The rooms are of different sizes, all fitted with fire-places, wash-hand basins, and other appliances calculated to promote the comfort of the theatrical *corps*. There are also a manager's room, a wardrobe and a ballet room. Care has been taken to secure ample daylight in the staircase, and indeed, wherever it can possibly be rendered available, thus ensuring, it is calculated, a saving of gas to the amount of £150 per annum.

**The Auditorium** In front of the stage, is a sunk space for a large orchestra; this enables patrons to have a clear view of the stage. There are five rows of Orchestra Stalls, to give **121** seats, 50 more than the *Theatre Royal, Broughton Street*. The seats are constructed on the swing principle and completely cushioned. There are 17 rows in the Pit, seating **600** in armed chairs, suitably upholstered. The entrance is from Cornwall Street.

There are no proscenium boxes, the Dress Circle takes a different form from what we have been accustomed to. Adjoining the proscenium, on either side, are three private boxes, with front projecting as an independent curve. The central portion of the frontstage shows the horse-shoe outline; and the

corresponding section of the Circle is fitted with seven rows of arm chairs of the architect's registered pattern, covered with peacock blue velvet; accommodation being thus provided for **209** persons.

Access to the Circle is had direct from a staircase exclusively appropriated to this part of the house. In the Amphitheatre, the two foremost rows are set apart as stalls, comprising **120** divided seats. The remaining space will seat **500** persons, who will enter at the back from an entrance in Grindlay Street. From all parts of the Amphitheatre a good view of the stage can be obtained; and the same can be said of the Upper Gallery, which has been constructed with a gentler slope than is commonly adopted, yet so as to accommodate about **1,000** persons.

**Decorations** The decorations were carried out by Bailie Hill of George Street. The ceiling forms a dominating feature and is constructed in a circular form; the space, which is flat, being divided into panels enclosing tasteful ornament in relief; the circumference taking the shape of an elegant cornice; the ornamental details are of an ivory-like tone, the remainder of the surface being treated with gilding. The coving which connects the ceiling with the proscenium is diversified with gilt ornament; and in a lunette over the proscenium opening is a painting by **Ballard** of *Apollo and the Muses*.

**Lighting with electric lamps** Like the *Savoy Theatre, London*, one of the best of Mr Phipp's creations, the Lyceum is to be lighted with incandescent electric lamps, enclosed in ground glass globes, which will reduce pollution caused by gas. Gas fittings are, however, introduced to provide against any derangement of the electrical apparatus. There are two Twelve Horse Power Gas Engines fitted up in a small building adjoining the theatre. Both systems, Gas and Electricity, will be applied to the footlights, which have been so arranged that red, green or white light can be turned on or shut off instantaneously.

(Note The Public Electricity Supply was switched on for the first time on Tuesday, April 11<sup>th</sup> **1895**, when the lamps in Princes Street were lighted. The first generating Station was in Dewar Place.)

**The exterior of the Lyceum** The elevation towards Cornwall Street presents rows of plain windows, the only ornamental feature being contributed by a few *Corinthian pilasters*. In the main frontage facing Grindlay Street, the three doorways, protected by a glazed vestibule, are surmounted by a balcony, over which rise two square and two rounded

columns with *Corinthian capitals*, separating the round-headed windows on the ground floor, arched doorways, higher up, square-headed windows, those of the second floor having small pediments; pitched mansard roof, diversified with dormers. The walls are faced with **Stuart's** cement concrete, and material by the same firm has also been largely employed in the construction of the staircases which has thus been rendered fireproof."

Note. As a boy, I remember when the huge slate paving slabs were removed and "**Stuart's Granolithic**" formed the pavements. At regular intervals, brass plates with the words "Stuart's Granolithic" were inserted in the cement, which were kept shining by the scuffing of countless boots and shoes. [Slate paving was extremely slippery in wet weather, particularly in Leith Street; Stuart's paving was designed to be non-skid. G.F.B.]

***PRELIMINARY NOTICE - NEW LYCEUM THEATRE, GRINDLAY STREET, EDINBURGH*** (S Wednesday, 22 August 1883) "Proprietors and Managers: Messrs Howard and Wyndham Designed by C.J. Phipps, Esq., F.S.A.

Mr Henry Irving Miss Ellen Terry And the entire London Lyceum Company, previous to their immediate departure for America

*Much Ado About Nothing*

Box Plan will be ready, and full particulars may be obtained on Monday first, 27<sup>th</sup> inst., at Paterson & Sons, Music Publishers, George Street

Note: Seats will be allocated in priority of application."

**Prices during Mr Irving's Engagement** (S Monday, 10 September 1883)  
Dress Circle, 10s.6d.; Orchestra Stalls, 7s.6d.; Amphitheatre Stalls (Numbered and Reserved), 6s.; Pit Stalls, 4s.; Special Tickets, 5s.; Amphitheatre, 2s.; Gallery, 1s. Doors Open at 7, Commence at 7.30.

**Special Late Trains Caledonian Railway – Lothian Road**

To West Calder and Intermediate Stations, Tuesday, September 11 and 18, Thursday, September 13 and 20, at 11 p.m. Saturday, September 15 and 22, 10.30 p.m.

**North British Railway – Waverley Station**

To Dalkeith, Musselburgh and Intermediate Stations Tuesday, September 11 and 18, Thursday, September 13 and 27, at 11 p.m. Saturday, September 15 and 22, at 10.45 p.m.

**Edinburgh Tramway Company**

Special Late Cars will meet the close of the performance and run to the following districts: Morningside – Haymarket – Portobello and Leith. Cars

will stand on the Main Lines in Lothian Road, opposite Grindlay Street. Ordinary Fares only will be charged.”

Note by author: HORSE TRAMS. The first rails were laid between Haymarket and Bernard Street on 6 November 1871. The last Horse route, between Tollcross and Craiglockhart, ceased to run on 24 August 1907. During the Horse Car period, fares were 1d., 2d., and 3d.

**PRICES** (S Thursday, 27 September 1883). “The Management have decided upon the following Prices of Admission (as the Ordinary Scale): Private Boxes, £2.2s.0d.; Dress Circle, 4s.; Orchestra Stalls, 3s.; Pit Stalls, 2s.; Amphitheatre Stalls, 2s.; Amphitheatre, 1s.; Gallery, 6d.”

**Excerpts from Criticism of the Opening Night** (S Tuesday, 11 September 1883)

**“Opening of Lyceum Theatre Mr Irving and Miss Terry in *Much Ado About Nothing***

The opening last night of the Lyceum Theatre may fairly claim to rank as an event of some consequence in the annals of the Edinburgh Stage. Noteworthy as a second attempt to domicile the drama in the West End of the city (the first being the short-lived Edinburgh Theatre, 1875- 1877)....In spite of the high prices, the demand for places fully equalled the capacity of an auditorium seated for 2,500 persons.

Everything was found in a state of readiness not always met with on an opening night. In the richly decorated foyer, were colossal busts of Mr. Irving and Miss Terry (executed by Mr. D.W.Stevenson, A.R.S.A.) which might be regarded, for the time at least, as representing the *genii loci*.

Mr. and Mrs. **Wyndham**, formerly of the *Theatre Royal, Broughton Street*, occupied seats in a private box. For a while the audience found themselves vis – à - vis of the iron screen, which will no doubt help to give a sense of security to those frequenting the house; but after an interval, the screen was raised to disclose a handsome maroon curtain. At the same time the orchestra took their places; and forthwith to a selection of Scottish airs the curtain was withdrawn, and revealed the effective drop scene, consisting of a group from **Alma Tadea**’s picture of *Sappho and Alcaeus*.

The curtain rose for the opening scene of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Of this production, it seems too much to say that never before did Shakespeare’s

delightful comedy receive an interpretation so adequate in essentials and in every detail so artistically complete. It is not merely that the leading characters are rendered with an efficiency rarely equalled and probably never excelled; for no less noteworthy is that attention to minor parts, which has all along formed a feature of Mr Irving's management, and, with the taste he has brought to bear on stage arrangements, has in no small measure contributed to his success.

In *Benedict*, the distinguished actor has found a role which fits him well. He has entered into the character *con amore*, and plays it with a zest that bespeaks at once thorough understanding and genuine sympathy. At times one was tempted to think that Mr Irving's mode of declamation lacked the easy fluency appropriate to *Benedict's* bantering talk. But, in the main, his renderings, even in this respect, left little to be desired. Miss Terry brought to her character of *Beatrice*, the freshness and spontaneity in which lies so much of her charm; every requirement of the part was well within this charming actress's compass.

The National Anthem was sung, Miss **Kate Sherry** leading off with the first stanza as a solo. A loud cheer signalled its conclusion. and cheers were again raised as Mr Howard led the architect of the theatre and other gentlemen who had had a hand in its successful opening. These, gave place to calls for a speech by **Mr Irving**. He was again enthusiastically greeted and said among other things, "The event tonight reminds me of an event which occurred 25 years ago in Edinburgh, and in which I took part. That was the closing night of your old *Theatre Royal* \*, a theatre associated with the traditions of the Scottish Stage. Tonight the event is a more cheerful one."

\* The *Theatre Royal, Shakespeare Square* closed on May 25<sup>th</sup> 1859

**Supper to Mr Irving** In commemoration of the opening of the theatre by Mr Irving, a large company of gentlemen had been invited by Messrs. Howard and Wyndham to meet the eminent actor at the Windsor Hotel, (Princes Street) at the close of the performance in the theatre. It was quarter past twelve before the sound from without the hotel announced the arrival of the guest of the evening. They soon sat down to supper. Mr Howard was in the chair and Mr Wyndham was vice-chairman. A long list of names appeared. I mention three, namely, Lord Young, Mr Robert Chambers, and Mr A.D.McNeill of the Princess's Theatre. After supper had been served,

which was not till two o'clock this morning, Mr Howard proposed the toast 'Henry Irving' ”.

The reporter concluded, “The proceedings were still going on when we went to press.” It must have been quite a party.

In the course of my research anent *Edinburgh Amusements* I picked up innumerable bits and pieces of data. In many cases they were simply jotted down to be brought out as an occasion demanded. One small item of interest in connection with the opening night of the Lyceum is to the effect that, “William Fowler, Registrar of Selkirk, was first in the Gallery.”

**Rob Roy, 1884** The first production of Rob Roy in the Lyceum was in July 1884. The proceeds, over £200, were handed over to Mr **John Heslop**, lessee of the *Theatre Royal, Broughton Street*, which was destroyed by fire on June 30<sup>th</sup> 1884; see page 56.

**D'Oyly Carte Opera Company** The Company paid its first visit to the Lyceum in November 1884 and presented *Patience, Pinafore and Pirates of Penzance.*; and in 1886, *The Mikado* , *Gondoliers* etc.

**Eva Moore, Christmas 1915** When I was a patient in Edinburgh Castle Military Hospital, 1915-1916, I had the good fortune along with a number of comrades to be the guest of Miss Eva Moore, who was appearing in the Lyceum in *Floradora*. Miss Moore took time off to say a few words to each disabled member of the Armed Forces. Each guest received from Miss Moore a postcard bearing her likeness and inscribed: “Christmas Greetings, from Eva Moore 1915.”

**MOVING PICTURES IN LYCEUM THEATRE (ED Wednesday, 5 April 1961)** A change was in the offing. By the turn of the century, the moving pictures had captured the imagination of thousands. Though many scoffed and predicted it as a flash in the pan, it had come to stay. The Lyceum was not slow to realise its possibilities, but determined to keep the live theatre to the fore.

In April 1912, posters appeared all over Edinburgh:  
“Charles Urban’s Live Motion Pictures in Kinemacolour” in actual colours of nature with our King and Queen through their tour of India in 1911”

The picture show ran for two weeks to packed houses. An original poster of the above show is in the possession of **Jimmy Leadbetter**, chief electrician at the Lyceum Theatre.”

***ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE KINEMACOLOUR*** (N Monday, 22 April 1912)

“The entire receipts of Monday Evening’s performance was given to the Mansion House Fund for the Widows and Orphans of the Sailors of the *Titanic*.”

***ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE S.S. TITANIC*** (N Thursday, 25 April 1912)

“Saturday Next Benefit Matinee For the Widows and Dependants of the Crew who lost their lives on the S.S. *Titanic* Patrons: The Rt. Hon. Sir W.S. Brown, Lord Provost, Rt. Hon. Earl of Roseberry. Boxes, £1.1s.0d.; Stalls, 3s.; Dress Circle, 2s.6d.; Family Circle, 1s.6d.; Pit, 1s.; Gallery, 6d.”

Note: Many places of Amusement and Churches raised funds for the Titanic Appeal.

**SOME ROYAL VISITS**

***FIRST ROYAL VISIT TO THE LYCEUM, REPLICA OF ADMISSION TICKET***

**“ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE 1931 In the presence of THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN SATURDAY EVENING, 11<sup>th</sup> JULY 1931, at 8 o’clock.**

**Robert Fenemore In association with Howard Wyndham, Ltd.  
Presents THE MASQUE THEATRE in *THE ADMIRABLE CRICHTON* By J.M. BARRIE**

**The proceeds of the performance will be handed to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary Bi-Centenary Extension Appeal  
ORCHESTRA STALLS £3.3s.0d. ROW M No. 3.  
To be seated by 7.45 p.m.”**

***VISIT BY QUEEN ELIZABETH AND DUKE OF EDINBURGH, 1955***

S Friday, 13 May 1955

“Royal Lyceum Theatre Jean Anouilh’s Play *Time Remembered*

In the presence of H.M. the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh, In the evening of Wednesday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, 1955

Prices: Grand Circle, £5.5s.0d.; Stalls, £4.4s. 0d., £3.3s.0d.; and £1. 1s.0d.; Upper Circle, £1.11s.6d.; and £1.1s.0d.; Balcony 10s.6d. and 7s.6d.”

Cost of admission to the Gallery was not mentioned.

***VISIT BY KING OLAV OF NORWAY, QUEEN ELIZABETH AND DUKE OF EDINBURGH, 1962 (S Thursday, 18 October 1962)***

“ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE *ROB ROY* In the presence of Their Royal Highnesses King Olav of Norway, H.M. the Queen and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. Last night.”

**Silk programme printed in City by R. and R.Clark** Two thousand programmes were made of stiff white silk woven in Dunfermline by Winterthur Silks, fringed and folded into a gold coloured Wallet. Government Guests received a copy last night, but other members of the audience had to pay 10s. for the programme.”

To use the current phrase of the Young Folk, the ‘other members of the audience’ were not ‘with it’.

**Lyceum Theatre Re-construction scheme, October 1935**

“They had the space, the men, and the money too but not the “know-how”

How to use that vacant space

The under-noted ‘re-construction scheme’ was somewhat belated, in this respect, that a perusal of the item dated August 28<sup>th</sup> 1883, relating to the ‘spacious basement’ with its carpenter’s and gas engineer’s workshops along with the orchestra room. In course of time this ‘spacious basement’ became redundant, gathering cobwebs, and the vacant space, for years and years, contributed its quota in City Rates, without any return.

After all, you know, those people who banded themselves into companies and called themselves *Business Efficiency Experts or Organisation and Method Experts* or what have you, have done and are doing a good job of work. Owners of property have been brought to realise that **every** square inch of a building must be made to yield profit, which means that machinery must be used to the utmost capacity.



**Lyceum Theatre Reconstruction Scheme to cost £4,000 (N Wednesday, 9 October 1935)**

**“Increased Amenities for Patrons** Structural alterations are at present being carried through at the Lyceum Theatre, Edinburgh. The whole scheme is a most ingenious job, which will not only provide more amenities for the patrons of the Grindlay Street house, but will also add to the comfort of the staff of the theatre.

The three most notable innovations which will result are a commodious **cloakroom** immediately off the foyer of the theatre, a charming **retiring-room for lady patrons of the Stalls**, and a new and **enlarged bar on Pit level**. In addition, there will be a rest room or mess room for the stage hands, several new lavatories, and a newly constructed **interior staircase** from the Stalls to the Pit and from the Pit to the Dress Circle. While the scheme is being carried through, the opportunity will also be taken to improve the **ventilation** of the theatre by constructing extra fresh air inlets with equipment to carry off the vitiated air.

**Ladies’ retiring room** New additions are being constructed by the opening-up of certain sections of the building’s interior and the re-construction of other rooms. An old property room and the carpenter’s office are being ‘swept away’, and in their place will be the Stalls’ retiring room for the ladies, with lavatories adjoining, fitted up in the most up-to-date manner. In the retiring room will be elegant dressing tables, couches, chairs and mirrors, while the rubber covered floor will also have a tastefully designed carpet.

The new **cloak-room** off the foyer and facing the entrance doors has been made possible by the clearing-out reconstruction of the ‘floor-space’ beneath the Pit. Some clever excavation was also necessary, and when completed there will be a most convenient cloak room about 40 feet long and 18 feet deep, with three large entrances and exits.

**New interior staircase** Access to the new interior staircase from the Stalls to the Dress Circle will be gained from the left-hand corridor leading to the Stalls, and also direct from the Pit. At the Pit level on this staircase will be the new entrance to the **new Lounge Bar**, which will be about 30 feet long by 22 feet wide. There will be rubber floorcovering of striking designs, and tables at which tea, coffee or ices may be served. This bar has been made possible by taking over a portion of the scenery store, and the alteration will

also result in an improvement in the compartment housing the scenery 'packs' and 'stacks'. Incidentally, the shelves, counter, and tables of the new Lounge Bar will be 'topped' with fireproof bakelite.

Some time will elapse before the whole scheme, which will cost in the region of £4,000, is completed. Messrs. W.S.Cruickshank and Son are the Contractors, with Mr J. Cameron in charge."

### **Proposed development of the Lyceum Theatre-Castle Terrace site, early 1960's**

[My father was perturbed that plans to build a Civic Theatre on the site would result in the disappearance of the Lyceum Theatre. He wrote "That its (Lyceum Theatre) days are numbered will be shown at the end of this chapter". The item he referred to follows my comments. Suffice it to say that the Lyceum is still there in 2001.]

### **Agreement Reached On Lyceum Development (S Friday, 28 June 1963)**

**"Hopes of new theatre by 1966** Agreement has been reached between Edinburgh Corporation and Mr Meyer Oppenheim on terms of the redevelopment of the Lyceum Theatre-Castle Terrace site, incorporating a new theatre and office block. This was reported to the Town Council yesterday by Lord Provost Duncan Weatherstone, who expressed the hope that the theatre would be completed by May 1966, when his term of office expires." .... "As revealed by *The Scotsman* a few months ago, the terms are that the site should be leased to Mr Oppenheim for 99 years at a premium of £300,000. He would then build a Civic Theatre which he would sell to the Corporation for about £700,000." Etc. etc.

## ***KING'S THEATRE, LEVEN STREET***

*News Advice*, Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1951

“The ground on which the ***King's*** is built was taken from Thomas J. Malcolmson, grocer and wine merchants, 2 Leven Street in 1905, and building began in the latter part of the year.

### Memorial Stone

Dr **Andrew Carnegie** laid the memorial stone of the ***King's Theatre*** on Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup> 1906. Copies of the current *Evening News* along with a handful of coins were placed under the stone.”

### **Preliminary Opening Notice (S Tuesday, 27 November 1906)**

“KING'S THEATRE LEVEN STREET EDINBURGH, MANAGING DIRECTOR MR. R.C. BUCHANAN

THIS MAGNIFICENT THEATRE WILL OPEN ON SATURDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER AT 7 p.m. With the GORGEOUS PANTOMIME *CINDERELLA* Produced by arrangement with Mr Robert Courtneidge (father of Cicely)

The Company includes Mr Dan Rolyat (in reverse it spells Taylor, his correct name) And Miss Phyllis Dare (at that time aged 17 years)

Prices of Admission: Private Boxes, £2.2s.0d., £1.11s.6d., and £1.1s.0d; Dress Circle, 5s. & 4s.; Orchestra Stalls, 4s.; Family Circle, 2s.; (if reserved 3s.); Pit, 1s.; Gallery, 6d.

Early Doors to Family Circle, Pit and Gallery, 6d. extra.

Matinees Saturday at 2.

The plan at Mr R.W.Pentland, Music Seller, Frederick Street”

The Pantomime *Cinderella* ran for 14 weeks.

Note: The Managing Director, Mr **R. C. Buchanan**, was a Treasurer of the City of Edinburgh Town Council. He owned a ‘string’ of cinemas in the city, including the ***Coliseum***, 1911 Fountainbridge, ***Palladium***, 1912, East Fountainbridge; ***Princess Cinema***, Princes Street, etc. He also had large London interests.

**KING'S THEATRE IMPORTANT NOTICE S Monday, 18 September 1911**

“On and after TONIGHT there will be TWO HOUSES NIGHTLY at 6.50 and 9 o'clock

WEE GEORGIE WOOD, HAMPTON AND BAUMAN, DAVE CARTER  
KING'S BIOSCOPE (i.e. Cinematograph or movies).

Prices: Orchestra Stalls, 2s.; Pit Stalls, 1s. 6d.; Dress Circle, 1s.6d.; Family Circle, 1s.; Pit, 6d; Gallery, 3d.”

I have shown this advertisement to record the admission prices.

**S Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup> 1945** - excerpt from an article “Theatrical Jubilee”.

“The *King's Theatre*, Edinburgh, built by W.Stewart Cruickshank & Son (Duff Street Edinburgh) was opened on December 8<sup>th</sup> 1906, and acquired in 1928 by **A. Stewart Cruickshank**, who had been a partner in the building firm and had entered upon management at that theatre, then becoming managing director of **Howard & Wyndham**.

Mr A. Stewart Cruickshank and his son are on the board of companies controlling the **Stoll** group of theatres and a number of theatres in London. In February of this year Mr Cruickshank was appointed Chairman of Howard & Wyndham (established 1895).

**KING'S NOT TO BE A CINEMA (D Saturday, 6 June 1936)**

An announcement was made to the Press that three of the theatres in the **Howard & Wyndham** circuits, including the King's, are being wired for taking films, does not mean the end of the stage shows or that of the theatres will be converted into super cinemas. It was stated at the *King's Theatre*, Edinburgh, last night, Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup> 1936, that although plans had been made for the wiring of the theatres, this did not indicate a change of policy but was the means of preparing for an emergency.

During the past season several theatrical productions had been cancelled, and the theatre had been in difficulties to find suitable productions. On such occasions, and possibly during the summer and at other times, it would be useful if the theatres were wired for the presentation of talking films. It was stated that the wiring of the theatres might be done, in the case of Edinburgh, during the close period, but no definite arrangements had yet been made”

### **ONLY WOMAN SWITCHBOARD OPERATOR IN EDINBURGH**

(*People's Journal*, Saturday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1937 A precis) “This unique honour fell to Mrs **Bertha Cassie**, popularly known as Bertha. Mrs Cassie started in the King's as a cleaner in 1917. At the end of six months **Mr Taylor**, the chief electrician, told her he was going to promote her to the perch – the little balcony in the wings from which the spotlight is worked. Her first week coincided with the appearance of the famous (ballet dancer) **Pavlova**. Bertha was going full steam ahead at the Switchboard at the end of 1937, having by that time, 20 years' experience behind her.”

**NEW LOOK** (N Wednesday, 28 June 1950) “The entrance to the *King's Theatre* has taken on a new look in the past day or two. Workmen have removed the canopy which for more than 40 years has served to provide shelter for patrons arriving by cab or taxi, and the metal pillars at the pavement's edge have gone. A new canopy will be constructed on the cantilever principle, thus giving a more spacious appearance to the entrance. The work is scheduled to be completed before the beginning of the *Festival*. The balconies at the entrances to the Pit and Gallery have also been removed and will not be replaced.”

### **STRUCTURAL ALTERATIONS**

**The King's Ready for the Festival** (D Saturday, 12 May 1951) “To be open in time for the Glyndebourne Opera The top Gallery will no longer exist. The final plan for the Upper Circle will not be completed. The owners regret the inconvenience that will be caused by the elimination of the many cheaper priced seats.”

**Extensive Alterations at the King's** (D Wednesday, 12 December 1951) “With the exception of the *1951 Edinburgh Festival* period, the *King's* was closed for structural alterations for almost ten months. It opened on Friday, December 14<sup>th</sup> 1951, with the pantomime *Puss In Boots*.

The “Gods” or Gallery was eliminated

The alterations were carried out in the Upper Circle section of the house, which has an extended upper section of some 300 seats now known as the Family Circle, separated from the Upper Circle by a broad gangway. This was the first major alteration in the theatre since it opened in December 1906. The total seating capacity is just over 1,500, 300 less than it was in its old form. The Architects were: Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth and Paul”

**The King's Carpenter Has Memories (D Tuesday, 29 December 1953)**  
“**George Trotter**, carpenter at the King's has memories of helping to carry the great and at that time frail, **Sarah Bernhardt** on to the stage in one of her last appearances in the city.

He joined the staff of the theatre in **1906**, its opening year, and has remained there ever since except for a three-year spell in the Army. His work has brought him into contact with many leading players through the decades, among them: **Matheson Lang; Seymour Hicks; Ellaline Terris; Dame Sybil Thorndike** he regards as ‘one of the best’.

One of his duties is working the trapdoor on which **Bruce McClure**, the genie of the lamp, appears in the *Aladdin* pantomime. Mr Trotter pays tribute to the way in which Mr McClure is always ready on the trap, facilitating the rise dead on cue.”

**More Seats for King's (D Saturday, 18 May 1963)** “A warrant to carry out alterations to the *King's Theatre*, Edinburgh, has been granted to **Howard & Wyndham, Ltd.**, at the Dean of Guild Court in Edinburgh. The main alteration will be the provision of two rows of seats, about 60, at the back of the Grand Circle.”

**GROVE STREET THEATRES FROM MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> 1897 TO SATURDAY JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup> 1921**

The first theatre on the site was the *NEW PAVILION THEATRE, GROVE STREET* (S Thursday, 11 February 11 1897)

“INAUGURAL PERFORMANCE MONDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, GRAND OPENING ATTRACTION SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT OF JOHN L. LUNDIE’S GREAT ANGLO-AUSTRALIAN COMBINATION In the Enormously successful Antipodean Drama *THE GREAT BANK ROBBERY* Popular Prices: 4d. to 3s.

Doors Open at 7 (Early Doors at 6.45) Commence at 7.30 Box Office at Theatre, 11 to 1 daily.”

*PAVILION THEATRE* After the opening three months the theatre was closed to allow the newly named theatre to be completed (S, Saturday, 29 May 1897)

“Pavilion Theatre - Grove Street To-night *Greed of Gold* To-night After this Evening the Theatre will be Closed until August, to allow of Finally Completing the Building.”

**Details of the Theatre Personnel. and the re-opening of the theatre(S Saturday, 23 July 1898)**

“Pavilion Theatre - Grove Street

Proprietors, Edinburgh Pavilion Ltd.; Managing Director, P. Sturrock Campbell,

Assistant Business Manager and Musical Director, T. Ellis, A.C.V.; Scenic Artist, A. Middlemiss; Property Master, Claude Dicken

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1898 And during the Week TWO GRAND PIECES CALLED BACK and *ROBBING ROBIN HOOD & BABES IN THE WOOD* Doors Open 7 Commence at 7.30. Admission: Balcony Chairs, 2s.; Orchestra Stalls, 1s.; Balcony, 1s.; and Pit , 6d.”

**CINEMATOGRAPH COMES TO THE PAVILION** (N Monday, 15 December 1902)

“PAVILION THEATRE HILLCOATS’ FAMOUS CINEMATOGRAPH AND GRAND VARIETY”

This is given simply to draw attention to **Moving Pictures** being shown at an early date, in what was known in the Grove Street district as the *Piv*; in the same manner as the *Operetta House, Chambers Street*, was known as the *O.P.*

**PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE OF VARIETIES** Time brings the inevitable change and, after nine years, a new name appeared above the door (N Tuesday, 6 March and Friday 9 March 1906)

“PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE OF VARIETIES GROVE STREET - EDINBURGH

WILL OPEN ON MONDAY, MARCH 12<sup>TH</sup> 1906 With POWERFUL VARIETY COMPANY Adelina; Geo.S. Adams; Fred Collins; Vaudevilles; Blanch Gerard; Ougenco; The Percys; Kathleen Maria; Geo. Bohee. FULL AND EFFICIENT ORCHESTRA

Doors Open at 7, Commence 7.30 Half an Hour Earlier on Saturdays.

Prices of Admission: 4d.; 6d.; 9d.; 1s.; 1s.6d.; and 2s.6d. Half Time prices at 9 o’clock: 6d.; 9d.; and 1s.6d.

**ALHAMBRA THEATRE OF VARIETIES** Someone once said, “Changes are Lightsome....” In the case of the Grove Street Theatres that appears to have a certain amount of truth, for example, we learn from the *News*, Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup> 1906:

“**ALHAMBRA THEATRE OF VARIETIES (LATE PRINCE OF WALES)**

GROVE STREET - EDINBURGH NEW MANAGEMENT COMMENCING, MONDAY, OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup> 1906 TWICE NIGHTLY AT 7 AND 9

MONSTER PROGRAMME 3 Zaracs, Lilian Travelli, Andy Fagan, Swan and Hunter, Sam Dactron, the Ladderities, Natallie and Sisters Terry

First House Doors Open 6.30, Commence, 6.50

Second House Doors Open 8.45, Commence, 9

People’s Popular Prices: 3d., 6d., 1s., and 2s.”

Two years after the opening of the *Alhambra* the time had come for a complete change, that is, from the **Live Stage** to the **Silver Screen**, and that



the change over was highly successful for a number of years was proved to be correct. (N Monday, 9 November 1908) The new name was ....

**“PRINGLE’S PICTURE PALACE** LATE ALHAMBRA - GROVE STREET

GRAND OPENING MONDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER (1908) and DURING THE WEEK

RALPH PRINGLE’S ANIMATED PICTURE COMPANY. ENTIRELY RE-DECORATED AND UPHOLSTERED.

Prices: Gallery, 2d., Circle, 3d., Pit 4d., Stalls, 6d.

Early Doors; “ 3d., “ 4d., “ 6d., “ 9d.”

**Ralph Pringle** was no stranger in the entertainment business as is shown in the advertisements in the *News*, Thursday, October 3 1907 and Tuesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1907, for the Synod Hall. He was also mentioned in the *News*, December 31<sup>st</sup> 1910, in connection with *Pringle’s Picture Palace, Elm Row*. In the *News*, Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup> 1911, there were advertisements for both the **Pringle’s** establishments, Grove Street and Elm Row. This may have happened frequently; I simply give a specific instance.

#### **Still another name to complete the cycle – Why?**

*Pringle’s Picture Palace* had shot its bolt late in 1917. The First World War, started on August 4<sup>th</sup> 1914, had still to undergo its worst fighting. In March 1918, Field Marshal Haig proclaimed “Our Backs are to the Wall.” It was a grim period; that we won the Last Battle is in the History Books. Yet December 1917, was the time selected to change the name of the Grove Street House. Had *Pringle’s* pictures lost the power to attract? Or was it that too many men had left the district to join the Colours? Or was it because of the competition from nearby picture houses which had been built just prior to the First War in 1914? I will mention a few: *Haymarket, Dalry Road, 1912*; *Tivoli, Gorgie Road, 1913*; Four in Princes Street – *The Picture House*, at No. 111, 1910; *Princess’*, at No 131, 1912; *The New*, at No 56, 1913; *The Palace*, at No 15, 1913.

Then again, what was suitable in the Gay Nineties and the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, simply did not measure up thereafter. In any case, a New Theatre did open (N Monday, 31 December 1917).

**“GARRICK THEATRE, GROVE STREET, HAYMARKET** OPENING MONDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1917 6.50 AND 9. MATINEES AT 2.30

O'CLOCK ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, AND SATURDAY JANUARY 5 1918

The Edinburgh Varieties Ltd., late Lessees of the The Theatre Royal, now control the above theatre, which has been entirely re-seated, tastefully decorated, and well appointed, and they hope, by giving their patrons the same class of Variety Entertainment as they have given to the public for the last four years, to earn their continued patronage and support.

THE REVUE OF THE MOMENT Mr H.J.Sinclair and Miss Queenie Crase Present the New and Up-to-Date Revue *HULLO BABY* In three scenes: Scene 1 - PICCADILLY CIRCUS; Scene 2 - A HOSPITAL WARD IN FRANCE; Scene 3 - INTERIOR OF VICTORIA STATION, LONDON. The soldiers who appear in the Hospital Scene and Victoria Station are all convalescent or discharged Soldiers who have done their bit overseas.

THE THREE KILTY GIRLS THE FOUR ROYAL GORDONS

Prices (Including Tax): Orchestra Stalls, 1s.10d.; Circle, 1s.3d.; Pit Stalls, 8d.”

Notes: As an ‘Old Soldier’ the crack about ‘convalescent’ Soldiers is just a bit of *Flannel*. To describe Grove Street, which runs North and South between Fountainbridge and Morrison Street, as being in Haymarket, was simply a piece of *Kidology*.

**ENTERTAINMENT TAX** It will be noted that the price of admission included “Tax”. This was Entertainment Tax which had been levied to help pay for the **1914-18** War; the Tax did not stop until May 30<sup>th</sup> **1954**. On a gross admission charge of 9d., Tax was ½ d., the Trade Levy was ¼ d., leaving 8 ¼ d. net to the Exhibitor. The corresponding figures for a gross admission of **1 s.** were: 2d., ¼ d. and 9 ¾d. For **2 s.** they were: 10 d., ¾ d. and 1s. 1 ¼ d. The Tax might well have been known as the *Power of the Farthing* which, incidentally, ceased to be a coin of the Realm on January 1<sup>st</sup> **1963**.

Little more remains to be told about the Grove Street Houses. The building was destroyed by fire on Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup> **1921**. The site is now (1964) occupied by **Martin**, the firm of Bakers.

## *FOUR HALLS*

### **CENTRAL HALL, TOLLCROSS**

#### **Opening of Central Hall, Tollcross, 1901 (N Saturday, 21 September 1901)**

“The Rev. **George Jackson** and his coadjutors in the West End Mission have been going from success to success since the Mission began in the *Albert Hall* in November **1888**. From 1890 services were held in the larger in the *Synod Hall*. The *Wesleyan Methodists* purchased ground from the Corporation, and on 17 October **1901** will take possession of their new premises. The site cost £20,000. Building and Furnishing will add £30,000. It is reckoned that about £25,000 applies to the shops, leaving £25,000 to be found.

There are seats for 2,000: 1,200 in the Area, 700 in the Gallery and 100 on the Platform. The Lecture Hall seats 350 and is to be used for the Sunday School. The stone is from Doddington Quarry near Wooler. The Principal Contractors: Messrs. S. & R. Slater, masons and joiners; David Fisher, plasterer; Knox & Sons, plumbers; Muirhead & Sons, painters; Finlay & Co., electricians, who also fitted up the projectors. Architects: Messrs. Dunn & Finlay.”

**Opening Services (N Wednesday, 16 October 1901).** These took place on Thursday, 17 October 1901.

#### **FIRST MOVING PICTURES AT CENTRAL HALL, TOLLCROSS (N Saturday, 21 September 1901)**

“Central Hall, Tollcross Cinematograph Fraser’s and Elrick’s Royal Cinematograph To-day at 3 and 8. Prices: 2s.; 1s.; and 6d. at Fleming’s, Earl Grey Street.”

It will be seen that the Rev. George Jackson lost no time putting into execution his plans for showing moving pictures in the Central Hall. The Hall was **not** to be confused with a Cinema House. From time to time during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, moving pictures were shown in the lovely Tollcross Mission Hall.

The Hall is mentioned in the **1915 Kinematograph Year Book**, page 468: “Tollcross, Central Hall Proprietor: **C.T. Nightingale.**” Mr Nightingale, a

solicitor, was Secretary to the Trustees who had responsibility for the property comprising the Central Hall Mission.

### **CINEMATOGRAPH EXHIBITIONS**

There were “cinematograph exhibitions” which appear not to have been completely trouble free. An outside exhibitor leased the Hall for performances but the Leaders eventually stopped them in **1907** after difficulty in collecting the rent and concern about “the nature of the entertainment”. They did resume in **1909** under more direct control of the Mission and after the Hall had been altered to meet the provisions of the new Cinematograph Act. In **1903** weekly Gospel Lantern Slide Lectures were held for a time but there is no indication of the popularity of this event. [This paragraph was extracted in March **2000** from “For The Making of Good Men and Women The story of the Edinburgh Methodist Mission 1888-1988”, by kind permission of the Rev. **David Cooper**, Superintendent of Central Hall, Edinburgh G.F.B.]

### **CENTRAL HALL, NEW YEAR CONCERT AND CINEMATOGRAPH (S Tuesday, 1 January 1912)**

“Artists taking part: **Philip Malcolm**, baritone; **Augustus Beddie**, elocutionist”.

Note: Philip Malcolm was for a time an assistant to his father, a blacksmith, whose place of business stood where the Boys’ Brigade Headquarters in Victoria Street now stand. I had a number of singing lessons from Mr Malcolm at his home in Grindlay Street, top flat.

### **Author’s reminiscences of the Central Hall**

I have happy memories of the *Central Hall*. I sang in the choir from May **1910** until I left the Marine Gardens in March **1915** for the Dardanelles.

‘Daddy’ **Caie** was the conductor of the choir and his son Tom was the organist. Tom never lived to achieve his ambition, namely, to play the mighty *Usher Hall* organ. A plaque to his memory is affixed to the organ structure. In the early days the organ manual was on the platform, at the right side. A number of years ago (writing in July **1963**) it was transferred to the floor of the Hall, dead centre and facing the choir.

The Rev. **Frank Benson** was the Superintendent of the Mission when I first became associated with the Central Hall. He was, in every sense of the

word, huge; as a preacher he had few equals. There were two such men in the city at that time: The Rev. **John Kelman** of St. George's, Shandwick Place and Mr Benson. Both had the same approach when expounding the **Message**. They would open the **Book** and read the **Text**; thereafter, they closed the **Book** and forthwith proceeded with their sermons, without notes, or as we would say today, *Off the cuff*. Not only did both those great preachers preach; they taught. A common phrase which both used was *For example*, and would then go into detail about an abstruse subject. I learned a great deal from those men of the **Cloth**. When I lay in Birmingham 17<sup>th</sup> General Hospital, within the University Buildings, Mr Benson paid me two visits in June **1915**. He had been transferred to *Brum* in **1913**.

***Popular Saturday Concerts*** During the first half of the second decade, that is up to **1915**, seats were at a premium in the ***Central Hall*** on Sunday evenings. It was the rule to bring chairs from the Lecture Hall to accommodate the overflow. The concerts carried on during the **1920's** but a falling off started with the introduction of Radio. The following are some of the artistes I remember with affection: **Robert Burnett**, baritone – he was the No. 1 in Scotland; **Catherine Mentiplay**, contralto; **Agnes Bartholemew**, elocutionist; **Scott Skinner**, 'Scotch' violinist, who always appeared in full Highland costume.

Many Institutions and Associations hold meetings in the Hall because of its central position in the city. For a number of years *The Store* (St Cuthbert's Co-operative Association) has held their Members' Meetings in the Hall.

### ***THE USHER HALL, Lothian Road, 1914***

**The Donor** Mr **Andrew Usher**, the distiller, of Blackford Place, Edinburgh, gifted £100,000 to Edinburgh in **1896** in care of the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council; for the purpose of providing a city hall to be used for concerts, recitals, or other entertainments or performances of a musical nature and for civic or such other purposes as they might from time to time sanction or approve.

**The Site was acquired in 1911** The site of the proposed new hall was adopted by the then Town Council on the motion of Sir **William S. Brown**. Lothian Road School, at the corner of Grindlay Street adjacent to the ***Lyceum Theatre***, occupied the site.

**Choice of Architect** Architects were invited to send in plans for a hall to cost £65,000 and to seat 3,000 in the auditorium and 500 on the platform. One hundred and thirty three sets of plans were exhibited in the hall of the new Corn Market, Gorgie (built in **1910-11**). Sir **Aston Webb** gave the decision on July 22<sup>nd</sup> **1910** by selecting the design of **Stockdale Harrison & Sons** of Leicester.

**Foundation Stone** King George V and Queen Mary, on their visit to Edinburgh after their Coronation, laid the foundation or memorial stones on Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup> **1911**.

**Ultimate Cost of Hall** The total cost of the hall was £146,842, and to the extent of £135,943 was met out of Mr Usher's donation and accumulation from interest; the balance being provided by the city which was £10,899 from Capital Account. The site cost £36,000. Building and Furnishing cost £94,000 (approximately).

**The Organ and Case** **Norman Beard** of Norwich and London built the organ with its 4,000 pipes and accessory ranks, at a cost of £4,000.

**Accommodation in 1914** At the opening there were 2,902 seats as follows: Area, 1,192; Grand Tier, 428; Upper Tier, 813; Orchestra, 349; and Platform, 120. In the *City of Edinburgh Financial Review* for **1961** the seating accommodation was given as 2,880,

**Rental of Hall** As at 1961, where the cost of admission exceeded 9s., the rental was 25 per cent. of the gross takings, with a minimum of £75. For meetings where there was no admission charge, the rental was £40. For use of organ £5.

**Opening of Usher Hall (S Saturday, 7 March 1914)**

Mrs Usher performed the opening ceremony on 6 March **1914**. The Lord Provost, Sir **Robert Kirk Innes**, K.T., then presented to Mrs Usher a silver glove box which had a representation of the exterior of the Hall in appliqué work, and was lined with satin in the colours of the city. The gift box bore the following inscription: "Presented to Mrs Usher on the opening of the Hall, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1914"

A week or two prior to the opening of the Hall I remember seeing two or three hundred Police Constables assembled outside. They had volunteered to 'risk life and limb' by occupying the Grand Tier in order to ascertain whether it would bear their combined weight – it did.

The Hall has been the scene of many memorable occasions. Many 'top' politicians have 'said their piece' in that braw building – alas too many to mention in detail. Round about **1938** Sir **Oswald Moseley**, Leader of the British Union (Fascist Movement) held one meeting there – but never another one. **Harry Pollit**, Leader of the Communist Party also spoke in the Hall; however the Lord Provost's Committee, Magistrates and Council frowned on such meetings and that was that.

Many notable persons have received the Freedom of Edinburgh within its walls, including Sir **Winston Churchill**, and Five Star General **Dwight Eisenhower**, who plotted and planned D Day, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944.

**The Edinburgh International Festival** The Festival has always been opened with a service of Praise and Thanksgiving in St Giles' Cathedral on the first Sunday; while the first concert of the Festival is held in the Usher Hall and is broadcast throughout Europe.

#### Billiard Halls

[**Queen's, Thornybauk** On my way home from Boroughmuir School I often went into the Hall for a half hour or so for a blether about football and politics. My mother regarded it as a den of iniquity and I would agree that in the immediate post War years the Hall was a convenient meeting place for spivs to transact their business. For the most part it was a well run Hall; owned by Davie Watson and managed by John. It attracted good quality amateurs, middling players and no-hopers, like myself. I fondly remember seeing Joe Davis and Kingsley Kennerley giving exhibition matches of billiards and snooker; for me this was entertainment *par excellence*.

**Trevelyan**, a few yards to the west of the Coliseum. Beyond knowing it was there, I have no comments to offer about the Hall or its patrons. G.F.B.]

## **THE STORY OF COOKE'S CIRCUS IN EDINBURGH 1835 to 1911**

I had the pleasure to meet Mrs **Cora Ledingham**, daughter of Talbot William Cooke, and grand-daughter of John Henry Cooke, at her home, 52 Broughton Street, on Monday, 14th January, **1963**. Over a cup of tea I learned a great deal about the Cooke family which has never been published.

While the story, or history, deals in the main with the circus, the spotlight is drawn on the driving force – Mr CIRCUS -, namely

### **John Henry Cooke**

**Born in New York, Wednesday, 27th January, 1836**

**Died in Edinburgh, Wednesday, August 2 1917, buried in the Dean Cemetery**

**The late John Henry Cooke** ( excerpts from **S Thursday, 23 August 1917**)  
**“Circus proprietor's notable career** John Henry Cooke, the well-known circus proprietor, died yesterday at his residence in Edinburgh (31 Gillespie Crescent) after a long illness which had confined him to his house for over three years. His career was a notable one. He circus ancestry which went back to the time of his great-grand-father, who founded the business which for many generations was recognised as something akin to an Edinburgh institution. The founder of what came to be a famous name in the entertainment world was Mr Thomas Cooke.

John Henry has now passed away at the ripe old age of over 80 years, was a much respected citizen of the Scottish capital. As far as Edinburgh was concerned, the circus business of the Cookes started on the site of the Caledonian Station Hotel in Princes Street, was carried on later in Nicolson Street, where the Empire Theatre now stands, then in Grindlay Street, where the Lyceum now is, until it found its headquarters in East Fountainbridge, where it remained for something like a quarter of a century.

He was an adept equestrian for half a century and had a large experience in dealing with animals, which he treated with great kindness and patience.”



**THE CIRCUS WILL SOON BE HERE** (S Saturday, 5 September 1835.  
Price 7d.)

**COOKE'S CIRCUS, LOTHIAN ROAD.** “A pavilion is at present in the course of erection at the South East [South West? G.F.B.] corner of the Lothian Road, for the purpose of being used as a circus, or an arena for equestrian exhibitions. It occupies a square of about 80 feet and is built of wood, in the most substantial and elegant manner. The diameter of the Ring is about 36 feet. The stalls for the horses are conveniently arranged so as to communicate with the circle. Several dressing rooms adjoin the circle. Gas has been introduced, and from the appearance the whole house exhibits at present we believe that it will be found, when finished, to combine ample accommodation with elegance and comfort.”

The following advertisement includes the cast and the prices of admission: as given in *The Edinburgh Evening Courant*, Monday, September 14th, 1835

“Under the Special Patronage of their Majesties, by Permission of the Lord Provost, Sir James Spittal, Cooke’s Royal Equestrian Establishment, that had the distinguished honour of performing before THEIR MAJESTIES,

Mr Thomas Cooke, proprietor, respectfully informs the Nobility, Gentry, and Inhabitants of Edinburgh, that his

Circus, Lothian Road, Edinburgh,  
Will open this present evening - (Monday September 14th, 1835)

The whole of the entertainment in the Three Kingdoms. The performers will be produced with the utmost grandeur and peculiarity of effect, embodying, in the same evening, the most unequalled Scenes in the Circle and acrobatic evolutions of manly agility; extra-ordinary Horsemanship by Messrs.J. Cooke and G. Woolford first rate riders of the present day, who will appear is some choice Scenic Acts; together with the full display of the abilities of the beautiful stud of Horses, and wonderful Group of Burmese Ponies, with the astonishing performance of the Equestrian Prodigies; and a succession of Novelties which constitute one of the most varied, animated, and interesting spectacles ever presented to the British public.

For full details of performances, see Hand Bills.

Prices: Dress Circle, 3s.; Side Boxes, 2s.; Pit, 1s.; Gallery, 6d.

Children under 10 years of age: Dress Circle, 1s.6d.; Side Boxes, 1s.; No half-price to Pit or Gallery. The Box Office is open daily, from the 11 to three o'clock, for the purpose of securing places.

Doors open at Half Past Six, and the performances commence at Half Past Seven o'clock precisely.

Season tickets may be had on the application at the Box Office, between the hours of 11 and 3.

Tuition in the Art of Riding given daily at the Circus; Cards of the Terms to be had at the Box Office. Riding Master, Mr Smith”

**Criticism of opening (S Saturday, 26 September, 1835)**

“Since the opening of *Cooke’s Circus in Lothian Road* each division of the house has been crowded almost to suffocation. Mr Cooke devoted the proceeds of Wednesday evening, £70. 2s. 6d., to that humane institution, the *House of Refuge*.

We may add, that the splendid fitting up of the circus excites universal admiration. Every article of furniture, we understand, such as matting, etc, was purchased from the *Asylum of the Blind*, as a further means of benefiting our charitable institutions, and we need scarcely repeat, that superior public talent such as is here exhibited, directed by charitable and humane management, is sure to meet its reward.”

**James Thorpe Cooke's Circus** appeared at 19 Nicolson Street during November, 1846; **Cooke’s Royal Circus** also made use of this venue during March, 1858.

***COOKE’S ROYAL CIRCUS , GRINDLAY STREET* (EC Saturday, 24 February 1877)**

“Cooke's Royal Circus, Grindlay Street,Lothian Road, Edinburgh  
Grand inauguration, Saturday evening, 24th February, 1877. The Brothers Cooke have great pleasure in announcing that they will open their Grand Equestrian Palace this evening, with the company of artists, horses, ponies, etc, far superior to any that have ever appeared in Edinburgh. Prominent in the list of names will be Messrs French and Harris, and Mlle. Rose, the Magnificent Russian Skaters, David Abbey Seal, the champion leaper of the World.

The comfort of the audience has been studied in every particular, and will be found perfect. Doors open at 7. Commence at 7.30. Illuminated Day Performances, every Wednesday and Saturday. First matinee, Wednesday, 28th February. Doors open at 2. Commence at 2.30.

Carriages may be ordered for the Evening at 10.15, and Day at 4.15.

Reserved seats can be secured in advance either at Messrs Woods, George Street, or at the Box Office of the Circus, open from 11 to 3 Daily.

Prices of Admission: Stalls, 3s.; Boxes, (select) 2s.; Pit and Promenade, 1s.; Gallery, 6d. Half- price to Stalls and Boxes only.

Secretary, C H Reid; Business Agent, Weston Gibbs; Director of Amusements, J. H. Cooke; Ring master, H. Channon; Sole Proprietors, Brothers Cooke.”

It was the custom for Cooke’s Circus to have a Weekly Programmes printed at a charge of one penny; this included the current ‘Bill’ in full, and gave ‘Next Week’s’ programme, in part. Cooke frequently resorted to what might be termed a gimmick in the 1860s, namely, the appearance of some of well-known personality would be advertised as, I expect, the guest of the ‘house’.

I append extracts from such a programme:

“Cooke's Royal Circus, Grindlay Street, Lothian Road , Established 125 years Programme - No. 56. 24.12.1878.

1. The Flower Girl, by Madame Elvira; 2. Gems of Ireland – Leicester Alfred and Ernestine Rosa; 6. Caroline Ray - with her Arabian horse, *El Cid*; 7. Comical August’s Performing Jerusalem Steed, *Cuckoo*.

The matinee will conclude with the fairy spectacle *Cinderella*”  
Friday evening, 27th December, **1878**. On same programme.

“Grand fashionable Bespeak, under the distinguished patronage and presence of Sir John Woodcock, Bart. and Party. Monday evening, 30th December, 1878. The performances will be honoured by the patronage and presence of the Honourable Bouverie Primrose and Party.

Sole Proprietors, The Cooke Brothers. Number 56 Turner and Co, Printers, Lothian Road, Edinburgh. 24.12. 78”

**EC** Tuesday, 12th April **1881** (part of the Bill from Cooke's Royal Circus, Grindlay Street) "Last night of the Season And benefit of Alfred Eugenie Cooke."

***Cooke's Great Circus and Strasbourg's Monster Menagerie Itinerary*** (**EC** Tuesday, 12 April 1881) Thursday April 14<sup>th</sup> (1881), ;Dalkeith; Friday April 15<sup>th</sup>, Penicuik; Saturday April 16<sup>th</sup>, Peebles; Monday April 18<sup>th</sup>, Innerleithen; Tuesday April 19<sup>th</sup>, Galashiels; Wednesday April 20<sup>th</sup>, Selkirk; Thursday April 21<sup>st</sup>, Melrose; Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Kelso; Saturday April 23<sup>rd</sup>, Jedburgh; Monday April 25<sup>th</sup>, Hawick"

**EC** Friday, 2 February **1883**

"Cooke Brothers Royal Circus, Grindlay Street, Lothian Road, Edinburgh. Tonight, Friday, 2nd February, 1883. Positively the last night of the present season when will take place the complimentary benefit of John Henry Cooke, under the distinguished patronage of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, George Harrison and Magistrates.

This was indeed the last night of Cooke's Circus in Grindlay Street. It only left seven months in which to demolish the Circus, clear the site, erect the handsome buildings and have it open for Monday, September 10th, **1883**. Note: It is a great pity the ghosts of those old builders could not give the 1960's builders an injection - HOW TO DO IT.

***JOHN HENRY COOKE'S NEW ROYAL CIRCUS, EAST FOUNTAINBRIDGE*** (S Friday, 5 November, **1886** Preliminary notice.)

"*John Henry Cooke's New Royal Circus* (off Lothian Road and Downie Place, Edinburgh)

John Henry Cooke begs respectfully to announce that his Renowned Equestrian Establishment will Open on Monday, 8th November, 1886. Under the patronage and presence of the right Honourable the Lord Provost and Magistrates of Edinburgh.

John Henry Cooke's Great Company Comprises the leading artists in the equestrian, gymnastics, and athletic professions.

A beautiful stud of thoroughbred and highly trained horses and ponies, dogs, pigeons and goats.

A special feature will be the *Patent Ring Mat*. Most visitors to circus entertainment will at times have experienced annoyance from the mould or sawdust having been thrown up by the horses as they galloped round the arena. This will be avoided in John Henry Cooke's New Circus, as the entire Ring will be covered by a patent Mat, manufactured expressly, at great cost, by Messrs Treloar, of Ludgate Hill, London.

Illuminated morning performances every Wednesday and Saturday. First morning performance, Wednesday, 10th November, 1886. Doors open at 2; commence at 2-30; terminating at 4.15.

Doors open Every Evening at 7; commencing at 7.30. Terminating at 10.15. Prices: Stalls, numbered and reserved, 3s.; Unreserved Chairs, 2s.; Amphitheatre, Balcony, and Promenade, 1s.; Gallery, 6d. (Entrance in High Riggs, leading from Tollcross and West Port). Children under 12 years, half price to all parts (Gallery excepted).

Carriages to set down with horses' heads towards Spittal Street.

Carriages to take up with horses' heads towards Lothian Road.

Booking office at Messrs Wood and Co., George Street. Second Price at 8.45, to 2s. and 3s. seats only.

SMOKING STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

Sole proprietor John Henry Cooke."

### **Criticism of the opening of Cooke's Circus (S Tuesday, 9 November 1886)**

"Mr John Henry Cooke's success and enterprise as a caterer of public entertainment was seen by the programme he presented last night in the well-appointed Circus in East Fountainbridge. The occasion was the opening of the new building and there were present the Lord Provost Sir Thomas Clark and Lady Clark, surrounded in the stalls by a considerable representation of the members of the Corporation and not a few leading citizens and their friends. Exactly at half past seven, the ring master Mr **J P Butler**, and the assistants, stepped into the arena amid loud cheers. The band, under Mr **G Spencer** struck up the National Anthem. After which Mr **Harry Dale** came forward and recited the prologue, prepared by the business manager Mr **Weston Gibbs**, Mr Cooke and his son. Leicester Alfred Cooke then appeared amid great cheering, and juggled. Miss Ernestine Rosa Cooke, who received more than one basket of magnificent

flowers, as did the younger sister, Edina Marion Cooke, aged 4 ½ years. Towards the close of the evening's entertainment Mr John Henry Cooke returned thanks for the support he had received.”

The Story of Cooke’s Circus is almost told. I have at hand **one of the last of Cooke’s Programmes**, dated for Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1910.

“TEXAS A MEXICAN VADDETTA IN ACTIVE PREPARATION. THE GREATEST OF ALL THRILLING AND SPECTACULAR PRODUCTIONS TEXAS DEALING WITH THE RISING IN THAT COUNTRY”

The programme itself took up little space, 5” X 7”; the whole measured 15” X 10”, with two folds. The front panel 10 ½” X 5”, showed at the top a picture of John Henry Cooke, with the caption “Head of the Great Circus Organisation.” At the bottom of the panel was a picture of the façade, which is now the Palladium Theatre. In all 16 advertisements appeared in the Programme:

“INMAN’S - THE LARGEST CHEMISTS, now amalgamated with Boots’ Pure Drug Company (which, of course, dates the amalgamation); HENDERSON - RINGS - 29 SOUTH BRIDGE; TAYLOR, ROYAL CIRCUS BAR, 161 LOTHIAN ROAD (Corner of Downie Place); NIXON LTD. BILLPOSTERS FOR EDINBURGH, 30 ELDER STREET; FRY’S CHOCOLATE; ETC., ETC.” So that, in advertisements, there is History.

The programme in full:

“JOHN HENRY COOKE’S CIRCUS – OFF LOTHIAN ROAD  
SATURDAY, 3<sup>rd</sup> DECEMBER 1910,  
AND DURING FOLLOWING WEEK

1. Selections by the band Conductor, Lieut. Harry Wamba;
2. Mons Harry, hurricane hurdle act;
3. Albin Acrobatic Grotesque;
4. Florence Leonard Whimsical Walker, the King’s Clown, equestrienna;
5. La Belle Sylvia West Dainty Vocalist and Dancer;
6. Horton and Onda Chinese Comedians;
7. Iona Ginnit with tiger horse *Rajah*;
8. Austin Boys Bumpkin Fools;
9. Lyal and Bert versatile vaudevillians;
10. Geo. and Harry World’s Champion Riders;
11. The Two Queries;
12. Leo, Thea and Eddie equilibrists and jugglers;
13. Edith Tudora and wonderful ponies;
14. Rossana stilt dancer;
15. Florence Leonard Continental Lady Jockey;
16. Silly Albert in Vocal

Interlude; 17. Lily and Elsie Judge and their Wonderful Cockatoos; 18. The Four Watsons Society Musical Marvels; 19. Gilbert Edwards Equestrian sketch, *Point to Point Races*; 20. "God Save The King"

Matinees – Wednesday and Saturday. Open at 2; Start 2.30. Early Doors 1.30 Nightly at 7.30. Open at 7. Early doors, 6.30. Carriages at 10

Seat bookings at Methven Simpson's, Princes Street

Sole proprietor and director: John Henry Cooke; Equestrian Director: Leon Douglas Cooke; Manager: Talbot Cooke"

### **The Saddest Day in the History of the Cooke Family**

I do not require to give the *News* date [11 February 1911] of the closing – it is like one's own birth date. There was no hint in the "near last programme" given above of the impending close down. Despite it being the sixth generation of the Cooke's in Circus Life, and a pool of over 200 lineal descendants, it was of no avail.

This was one case where "The Show Did Not Go On". As we have seen, the old chief, John Henry Cooke, retired in poor circumstances and for the last three years of his life he was confined to his home in Gillespie Crescent, Edinburgh. I have happy memories of the Circus when I was a boy 65 years ago. I also went there as a youth as I lived in the Tollcross area from 1910 to the outbreak of War in August 1914.

### **Farewell to a Well Remembered House Princes Street Memorial Seat to John Henry Cooke**

It is pleasing to record that one of the many seats gifted to the City is in Princes Street and carries the following inscription:

"John Henry Cooke, Cooke's Royal Circus,  
1837– 1917"

"1837" should, of course, read "1836".

## **CIRCUSES, SHOWGROUNDS AND SKATING RINKS**

***EDMOND'S (LATE WOMBWELL'S), GRASSMARKET, 1881*** (S Thursday, 29 December 1881)

“EDMOND'S (LATE WOMBWELL'S) ROYAL WINDSOR CASTLE MENAGERIE will make a grand entry into Edinburgh this day from Dalkeith, and after parading the principal thoroughfares will proceed to the Grassmarket and exhibit by the Corn Exchange, for the New Year holidays. DELMONICO! DELMONICO! DELMONICO! The only real foreign lion-tamer is coming. This world renowned lion subjugator has no equal in his particular line of profession. He performs with forest-bred groups and those bred in captivity.

The menagerie will be open on Friday, December 30<sup>th</sup> at 12 o'clock. Performances by DELMONICO at 1 p.m., 3 p.m., 5 p.m., 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. Admission to view the whole: 1s.; children, 6d. Feeding time 6d. extra.”

***BOSTOCK AND WOMBWELL'S, GRASSMARKET, 1891*** (*Leith Burghs Pilot*, Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December 1891)

“BOSTOCK AND WOMBWELL'S MONSTER COMBINED SHOWS  
GRASSMARKET – EDINBURGH DURING CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

ELECTRIC LIGHT AN ENTIRELY NEW FEATURE IN THE LIGHTING  
OF TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS ALSO AT HENDERSON STREET,  
LEITH

ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 19 AND MONDAY DECEMBER 21,  
1891”

***BOSTOCK'S MENAGERIE*** (S Wednesday, 26 December 1894)

“FIRST VISIT TO SCOTLAND BOSTOCK'S GREAT CONTINENTAL  
MENAGERIE NOW EXHIBITING IN THE GRASSMARKET.

ADMISSION: 1s; CHILDREN 6d. FEEDING TIME – 9.30 p.m. 5d.  
EXTRA”

***SHOWGROUND, GIBSON TERRACE, 1900*** (N Monday, 31 December 1900)

“SHOW GROUND GIBSON TERRACE, OFF FOUNTAINBRIDGE  
ADMISSION FREE”



Writing in March 1964, old residents of the district, or their grandchildren, might be mildly surprised to learn on reading the above notice, that the ‘Old Street’, where Granny lived, once housed a showground.

***BOSTOCK AND WOMBWELL’S MENAGERIE, GRASSMARKET, 1902***  
(N Thursday, 2 January 1902)

**“BOSTOCK AND WOMBWELL’S MENAGERIE GRASSMARKET  
- EDINBURGH PRICES: ADULTS, 1s., JUVENILES, 6d.”**

***ARTICLE ON THE GRASSMARKET BY COUNCILLOR WILSON  
McLAREN***

I turn once again to Councillor **McLaren** for his comments on the Grassmarket. This first appeared in *The World’s Fair*, in 1937, and extracted from a recent issue of the *Weekly Scotsman* by ‘Marbell’.

“In those days “(referring to the period before the dawn of 1900) “ outdoor and indoor amusements were in plenty. The Grassmarket was another location that provided all the fun of the fair thirty years after this district had attained notoriety in respect of the cold-blooded murders of **Burke and Hare** in 1827-1828. The All Hallow Fair held in the spacious thoroughfare received special attention.

I have a vivid recollection of the amusements, with the wily horse-cowpers, farmers and characters who never failed to draw the crowd...*Wombwell’s Menagerie*, which stood near the Corn Exchange, was one of the principal attractions. The street was lined from top to bottom with hawkers’ barrows, Punch and Judy, and other penny shows. The *Fat Lady’s* booth stood cheek-by-jowl with that of the *Petrified Mummy*, claimed by the owner to be thousands of years old, and **Ned Holt**, one of the most original and wayward characters of Auld Reekie, had charge of the show.”

***ROYAL ITALIAN CIRCUS, FOUNTAINBRIDGE, 1907*** (N Monday, 15 April 1907)

**“ROYAL ITALIAN CIRCUS HELD IN COOKE’S CIRCUS  
(Fountainbridge)**

COMMENCING THIS MONDAY - APRIL 15<sup>th</sup> AT 2.30. BEFORE KING AND QUEEN AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE, OVER 200 PERFORMING ANIMALS

PRICES: NUMBERED AND RESERVED, 3s.; UNRESERVED, 2s., 1s., AND 6d.

CHILDREN, HALF-PRICE UNTIL SATURDAY NIGHT - MAY 18<sup>th</sup> 1907”

***EVANS' CARNIVAL, PONTON STREET, 1911*** (N Friday 22 December 1911)

“EVANS' CARNIVAL PONTON STREET TOLLCROSS Admission free Opening Night “All the fun of the fair etc.””

***BOSTOCK AND WOMBWELL'S, FOUNTAINBRIDGE, 1912*** (N Wednesday, 24 July 1912)

“BOSTOCK AND WOMBWELL'S FOUNTAINBRIDGE TOLLCROSS FOR 9 DAYS - FRIDAY JULY 26<sup>th</sup> TO AUGUST 5<sup>th</sup>, 1912

ADMISSION: 1s.; CHILDREN, 6d. FEEDING TIME - 9.30 p.m. - 3d. EXTRA”

***PINDER'S, PALLADIUM ROYAL CIRCUS, FOUNTAINBRIDGE, 1932*** (N Tuesday 27 December 1932)

“BEAUTIFUL HORSES, ACROBATS, HIGH STILT WALKERS, THE FUNNIEST CLOWNS ETC. PRICES: 6d., 1s.6d. and 2s. (PALLADIUM 27874)

This circus has no connection with late John Henry Cooke.”

***SHOWGROUND, GARDENER'S CRESCENT***

The last Boxing Booth I remember in Edinburgh was, I think, Stuart's, whose tent was pitched on the site now occupied by the FOU Telephone Exchange. [In the winter of 1938-39 I attended the Shows on this site and had a ride on the Roundabouts.G .F.B.]

***LOCHRIN ICE POND, TOLLCROSS*** (N Saturday 3 February 1912)

“LOCHRIN ICE POND HAS NOW A SPLENDID SURFACE OF ICE OPEN TODAY, ENTRANCE BY TOLLCROSS 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. ;

2 p.m. to 5 p.m.; 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

ADMISSION TO SKATING 1s.

THE ICE POND WILL BE COVERED WITH A FRESH SHEET OF ICE

EVERY MONDAY DURING FEBRUARY, MARCH AND APRIL

CURLING – MONDAYS, WEDNESDAYS AND FRIDAYS  
ADMISSION 6d. ICE AND CURLING STONES 6d. per hour. SKATING  
– TUESDAYS, THURSDAYS & SATURDAYS ADMISSION AND  
SKATING 1s.”

**N** Wednesday, 31 December **1913**

“LOCHRIN ICE POND TOLLCROSS TONIGHT SKATING, 7.30 to 10  
p.m.

ADMISSION AT SKATING 6d.” Note the reduction in Admission Price.

Extract from an article (**S** Wednesday, 13 November **1963**) about Ross’  
Lochrin, Tollcross, which celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their  
appointment as Hillman car dealers. “An ice rink until taken over by the  
company in **1920**. The Lochrin premises were spacious by the standards of  
those days, and were adequate for many years.”

[On warm days during the summer holidays in the late 1930’s and early  
1940’s my pals and I often used to visit the Ice Factory in Lochrin, next to  
what is now Arnold Clark’s showroom. (the site of the Lochrin Ice Pond)  
An attraction was to see blocks of ice, 1 foot square, being loaded onto vans,  
possibly for use by hotels. Once the task was completed the lads would let  
us have small chunks of ice which we would suck. G.F.B.]

***THE GRAND RINK, WEST FOUNTAINBRIDGE*** (**N** Wednesday, 24  
November **1909**)

“THE GRAND RINK THE CALEDONIAN RINK (LIMITED), WEST  
FOUNTAINBRIDGE, LOTHIAN ROAD

To be opened by Sir R. Cranston, K.C.V.D., V.D., LLD. on Friday  
November 26<sup>th</sup> 1909. Baillie Geddes in the chair. J. Woolfoot, manager

THE GRAND RINK WEST FOUNTAINBRIDGE, LOTHIAN ROAD

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC – FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26<sup>TH</sup> 1909

PRICES: EVENING 6d. SKATES 1s.”

In **1910** I was a regular attender at the ***Grand Rink*** until it became the  
***Coliseum Picture House***, which opened on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> December **1911**.

## ***EAST FOUNTAINBRIDGE SITE***

As I write, November 19<sup>th</sup> 1963, 77 years have passed since the Palladium building was opened on Monday 8 November 1886 by **John Henry Cooke**, details of which are given under *THE STORY OF COOKE'S CIRCUS IN EDINBURGH*. In wet weather the name Cooke's Circus can be seen shining through the paint on the façade. All good things come to an end and time, like an ever rolling stone, bears all her sons away. Cooke's Circus closed down on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1911. While the circus was in existence it did present moving pictures as the following advertisement of 2 April 1908 shows. Once the Circus closed it became a *picture house* in 1912. In turn, it ceased to be a picture house as shown in the *News*, Saturday, August 13<sup>th</sup> 1932:

### **COOKE'S CIRCUS BECAME PICTURE PALACE IN 1908**

For many years there was a firm belief that it was only after Cooke's Circus closed down in 1911 that it became a Picture House; that such is not the case is shown in the following *News* advertisements.

#### ***COOKE'S CIRCUS PICTURE PALACE* (N Thursday, 2 April 1908)**

*"Cooke's Circus Picture Palace* Twice Nightly 7 and 9

THE ORIENT LIFE MOTION PICTURE CO. And VAUDEVILLES

GENERAL MANAGER AND CICERONE: W.C. BURNS

PRICES: Box Seats, 1s. 6d.; Tip-Up Seats, 1s.; Ring Chairs and Balcony, 6d.;

Side Pits, 4d. Children Half Price. High Riggs, 3d. Children, 2d"

Note: It will be seen that some of the customers entered from the High Riggs. This may not convey much to the reader but the admission price may give a clue. A circus ring is an awkward place to drape the *Silver Screen* which was suspended from the ceiling about mid-centre of the Ring. This meant that the High Riggs patrons in particular viewed the screen from the rear; in consequence, all the pictures being silent had sub-titles, which appeared back-to-front. This handicap was treated in a good humoured manner and it did not take long to learn the art of reading captions, pronto. Anyway it cost less to 'see' from behind and that meant something to me while I was still an apprentice.

N Thursday, 22 October **1908**

Cooke's Circus – Picture Palace 30<sup>th</sup> Week - Last Week but one of the Season,

Commencing Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. Last Week devoted to Competitions for Children. Prizes, £5. 5s. 0d. Friday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, Gigantic Benefit to Mr Burns, Manager”

Mr **William Burns**, a one time lion tamer, was manager of the Palladium; a position he held in **1908**. He stood no nonsense – from anyone.

### ***PALLADIUM PICTURE HOUSE, 1912***

N Friday, 15 November **1912**

“THE PALLADIUM (COOKE'S CIRCUS RECONSTRUCTED) GRAND OPENING MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1912.

7 TWICE NIGHTLY 9

WE PLACE THE WORLD BEFORE YOU. POPULAR PRICES: 3d.,4d.,6d. and 9d. SEATS IN PRIVATE BOXES: 1s.3d.

MATINEE - SATURDAYS. CHILDREN, 1d., 2d. and 3d.

*THE SHADOW OF THE BLIND AND CHARLIE COLMS THE DANDIE'S CLUB”*

N Tuesday, 19 November **1912**

“The picture palaces seem to grow in our midst like mushrooms this year; the public appetite for such pictorial entertainment is as voracious as ever. For proof, one had only to glance at the large attendance at the Palladium last night, the latest addition to the picture theatres. The Palladium is a bright, cheerful theatre and its programme is a good balance of grave and gay, education and humorous.”

*Kinematograph Year Book, 1915*, page 500

“Picture Companies and Theatre Proprietors The R.C. Buchanan Circuit, London Office, 9 Little King Street, Andrew Street W.C.

Edinburgh Office: Palladium, Edinburgh. Managing Director: **R.C. Buchanan**.

General Manager: Bertram C. Grant.

Houses: *Palladium*, Edinburgh; *Coliseum*, Edinburgh; *Princess Cinema*, Edinburgh”

It will be seen from the *King's Theatre* chapter that Mr Buchanan was its Managing Director. He was Treasurer of Edinburgh Town Council at the above period, or thereabouts. During **1912** he turned *Cooke's Circus* into a picture house; well, at least, a place where moving pictures were shown.

**Talking pictures** The *News Advice* says that the first talking pictures in the Palladium were shown on March 17<sup>th</sup> **1930** with *The Voice of the City*.

N Saturday, 13 August **1932**

**“PALLADIUM, EAST FOUNTAINBRIDGE 5.30 to 10.30. MISCHIEF & THE SKY SPIDER. ADDED ATTRACTIONS - PETE MARSH AND HIS AEOLIAN DANCE BAND VARIETY – JACK ROSS, DAME COMEDIAN”**

(This was the last “Picture” advertisement for the Palladium, known in the district as the *Pall.*)

### ***PALLADIUM THEATRE, 1933***

On Thursday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, **1962**, I had coffee with Miss **Millicent Ward** and her husband Mr Bruce in their home at 40 Montpelier, Edinburgh, when I received the following *gen* about the start of the Palladium Theatre:

Early in **1932** an attempt was made by a number of persons who were interested in the “Stage” to transform the Palladium premises into a theatre; unfortunately the project fell through. It may be added the persons who were interested in the project were not Troupers! For some 18 months Miss Ward and her Company had appeared at the *Studio Theatre*, Elm Row; “The Show Must Go On”. After the failure in 1932 Miss Ward was invited to ‘have a go’ to complete the job. She was fortunate that two of her friends were prepared to back the venture. The entire Company, along with some professional assistance, succeeded in building the stage and much needed dressing rooms. The seating accommodation was altered to conform with theatre standards.

During the alterations Miss Ward applied to the Corporation to install a gas heating system. The Corporation turned down her plea; as a consequence, the Palladium Theatre opened on Saturday December 30<sup>th</sup>, **1933**, with the temperature near freezing point. The venture was almost killed at birth. Nothing daunted, Miss Ward made another application to the Corporation to install a gas heating system; this was a successful.

Miss Ward and her Company remained at the Palladium until she left for a season at *Her Majesty's Theatre*, Carlisle, on Monday, 29th April, **1935**.

Miss Ward gave me a brochure containing the information anent her season in Carlisle. The brochure has a number of photographs of the cast and Miss Ward kindly autographed it. In due course it will be lodged in the Edinburgh Room.

N Thursday, 21 December **1933**

“PALLADIUM THEATRE, FOUNTAINBRIDGE EDINBURGH'S  
NEWEST AND MOST COMFORTABLE THEATRE OPENING  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1933. TWO MATINEES, MONDAY  
AND TUESDAY AT 2.30

MILLICENT WARD and her repertory players with full LONDON  
COMPANY

*LORD RICHARD IN THE PANTRY*

Prices, including Tax: Orchestra Stalls, 3s., Stalls, 2s., Circle, 1s., and Side  
Circle, 7d.”

**Mr Daniel Livingstone Campbell** Better known as Dan, he is a good mixer, both among theatre people and in Women's Guilds. He was with the 9th H.L.I., one of the first Territorial battalions to land in France in November **1914**. Early in the **1930s** he formed his own company of 12 artistes touring Scotland from north to south. In **1942** he became manager of the *Palladium*, since when he has made life more pleasant for those on and behind the stage. He always has a cheery word for patrons.

Many well-known Scots comics have been before the Footlights of the *Pall*, among whom were: **Alec Finlay, Dave Willis, Andy Stewart** and **Duncan MacCrae** who frequently appeared in straight plays. The record for the longest period of top box-office returns was made by **Lex Maclean** - 25 weeks.

The *Pall* is still going strong as at November **1963**.

## CINEMAS

### **BLUE HALLS, LAURISTON STREET** (N Wednesday, 1 January 1930)

Opened on 1 January 1930, as Edinburgh's New Talking Picture and Variety Theatre.

**Leslie Faber** starred as 'Weston' in the All-Talking Film *White Cargo*. Prices were: 4d.; 6d.; 8d.; and 1s. It was intimated that The **Blue Halls** was equipped with Western Sound System and that the Grand Unit Orchestral Organ was built t by Messrs Ingram & Co., Organ Builders, Edinburgh.

The **Blue Halls** was built on what had been a cattle market up until the beginning of the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It catered for a working-class 'clientele'; was on a good circuit as many excellent pictures came its way; was well managed and kept its 'head' and name until it became known as the **Beverley** on Monday, April 26<sup>th</sup> 1954.

Extract from 1954 *Kinematograph Year Book*, pages 415-416. "Blue Halls Proprietors: Blue Halls (Edinburgh) Ltd., 14 Walker Street, Edinburgh. Prices: 1s. to 1s.9d. Seats: 1,757"

Last advertisement for the **Blue Halls** (N Saturday, 24 April 1954). **Johnny Weissmuller** and **Johnny Sheffield** in *Tarzan Triumphs* 3.45, 6.25 and 8.5; and **Rosa Clark** in *Island of Monte Christo*"

### **BEVERLEY, LAURISTON STREET** (N Monday, 26 April 26<sup>th</sup>, 1954 1<sup>st</sup> Advertisement)

The **Beverley**, Formerly the **Blue Halls**, opened with *The Robe*, in Cinemascope and Technicolor; at 2.40, 5.25 and 8.15. Special Morning Show for Children at 9.45 a.m. on Saturdays.

*The Beverley* closed down in 1959

### **CALEY, 31 LOTHIAN ROAD** (N Monday, 1 January 1923 Advertisement)

"*The Caley*, Edinburgh's new Cinema Superb Magnificent Music, Sumptuous Seating and a Picture Programme which includes: *The Game of*



*Life, G.B. Samuelson's* Spectacle, The Picture That Makes The Dimples To Catch The Tears. Continuous from 1 till 10.30. Musical Director – Mr **Albert Dobson**”

**First advertisement showing Prices (N Saturday, 13 January 1923)**  
Prices: 1s. and 2s. Children Half-Price from 1 till 4.

**Opening of Caley and St Andrew Square (N Tuesday, 2 January 1923)**  
“The first day of the New Year was fixed as the opening date of two new picture houses in Edinburgh; the *Caley* in Lothian Road and the *Square* in Clyde Street.

The *Caley*, which is situated near the West End of Princes Street, has an imposing frontage with entrance doorways framed in white cippilono marble. To erect such a building, costing over £25,000 within eight months, on a site which had to be cleared of its existing structure is no mean achievement, and the Management yesterday had the satisfaction of seeing the house crowded. There is a total seating capacity of 900 – 600 in the area and 300 in the balcony. The seating and upholstery have been carefully selected to produce a harmonious and artistic effect.

A varied and very entertaining programme was submitted to the patrons, the feature film being *The Game of Life*, a production reminiscent of the reign of Queen Victoria.”

**The Caley Presents Its last All Silent Programme and Why! (N Wednesday, 1 May 1929)**

“*The Caley, D.W. Griffith's Drums of Love*. Patrons are asked to note that the Theatre will be closed for **reconstruction** on and after Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May 1929”

Opened on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1923 the *Caley* was closed for reconstruction only 6 years 5 months later, for two very good reasons: 1. The Talkie Boom Was On and 2. To ‘cash in’ it was imperative that the seating accommodation should be drastically increased. It was, from 900 to 2,100. The re-opening announcement was advertised in the Press exactly 7 months 3 weeks from the time reconstruction started. A good job of work by any standard.

**Re-opening of The Caley (N Saturday, 21 December 1929 Page 4, Among The Films)**

“The principal event in the Edinburgh cinema world next week will be the re-opening of the Caley Picture House after extending into the County Hotel site....now a super-picture house with accommodation for 2,000, ...it will stand comparison with any cinema of like capacity erected, or in course of erection in the city. (The reference to cinemas erected or in course of erection referred to the *Playhouse*, opened August 12<sup>th</sup> 1929, the *New Victoria*, opened August 25<sup>th</sup> 1930 and the *Astoria and St Andrew Square*, both opened on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1930.)

The public, on Monday, will find one of the most up-to-date buildings for picture presentation in the country open for their patronage. There is now an entrance-hall with a gold leaf roof; a vestibule with Parisian glass panels and Austrian oak panelling; cloak-room, confectionery stall, and a lift capable of conveying 20 persons to the balcony.

There are hand-wrought ironwork railings with Italian modelled staircases leading to the interior. Comfort and utility have been the main considerations, from the most remote corner of the interior, whether the area or upstairs, there is a perfect view of the screen, whilst the acoustics (considering the fact that the programmes will be practically ‘all talkie’) have been carefully studied.

The balcony is almost straight; with hardly a foot deviation in an 80 foot span, a method of construction which is tried for the **first time** in Scotland. There are no side balconies – a most commendable feature [I believe the reporter is alluding to Poole’s side balconies which gave one a crick in the neck G.F.B.]. The decorative work in the interior is of a modest character, and the lighting is calculated to give the maximum of effect and the minimum of ‘glare’ - the latter a rather too common feature in some of the present cinemas. Four enormous shades hold 40 lights each, and every shade includes four different colours worked from a ‘dimmer’ in the operating box. The actual operating box itself contains the R.C.H. apparatus, and a good test should be provided by the ‘talkies’ of Reginald Denny (his first in the city) and Laura La Plante.”

**Brown’s County Hotel** After I was discharged from the Army in March 1916 on account of wounds, I thought, like many Americans, that I was far removed from the scene of battle. However, this was not the case as

Edinburgh suffered a Zeppelin Raid on the night of Sunday April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1916. The night was clear, a perfect night for their dirty work. I saw the Zepp that night and occasionally a bright light signified the opening of the bomb chambers. A number of places were hit, including Brown's County Hotel; Grassmarket at, or about the Beehive Inn, or the White Hart Inn; George Watson's Boys' College, then in Archibald Place, Lauriston Place, a plaque in the playground marked the spot where the bomb fell; and Marshall Street, where, unfortunately, some people were killed.

**First All Talkie Caley Programme (N Saturday 21 December 1929 Advertisement)**

"The New *Caley* Picture House Lothian Road Edinburgh, Opening on Monday First at 2 p.m. With Our Old Favourites To Be Seen And Heard, **Reginald Denny** in *One Hysterical Night* And **Laura La Plante** in *The Love Trap*.

Popular Prices: Front Stalls, 9d.; Back Stalls, 1s.3d; Balcony, 1s.3d; Circle, 2s. Continuous from 2 till 10.30"

Extract from **1938 Cinema Buyers Guide** page 173

"Caley Picture House, 31 Lothian Road. Proprietor: Caley Picture House Ltd. Seating, 2,100"

**1954 Kinematograph Year Book** Pages 415-416 "Caley Picture House, 31 Lothian Road. Proprietors; The Caley Picture House Co. Ltd., 5 Coates Place. Prices: 1s.9d to 3s.1d. Seats: 1,900. Proscenium, width 50 feet. Screen, 40 feet by 15 ½ feet"

Note the loss of 200 seats between 1938 and 1954 was to make room for the large Todd-O screen. Many Super Cinemas lost seats due to the same reason

**EDINBURGH FILM GUILD (N Saturday, 19 October 1963 Page 5)**

**"Edinburgh Film Guild** Opens its Thirty-Fourth Season of **OUTSTANDING FILMS ON SUNDAYS, CALEY PICTURE HOUSE, ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 20 1963**

Subscriptions 25s. which includes admission to 10 performances.

LIBRARY, CLUB ROOMS, DISCUSSION GROUP. Call, Write or Phone for Illustrated Brochure FILM HOUSE, 3 RANDOLPH CRESCENT, CAL 1671”

The Guild has provided a long felt want over the years, despite a slight falling off in membership, which has resulted in a contraction of the Season and a little extra on the Subscription. A year or two back the Subscription was 21s. for 12 shows.

***CENTRAL HALL, TOLLCROSS*** See page 35.

***COLISEUM, 125 FOUNTAINBRIDGE***

To pass along Fountainbridge, the busy thoroughfare that it is today, **1963**, it hardly seems credible that, as recently as the first decade of the 20th Century, it was little better than, in appearance, the purlieu of some country village which had been left to decay. From Lothian Road or Earl Grey Street out as far as Dundee Street the ‘main’ road was narrow. Bit by bit, a piece here and there was demolished so that in the 1960’s it had the semblance of being almost fit enough to carry the huge load of traffic every hour of the day. If one would care to see how narrow Fountainbridge was in the not so long ago, see that part of the street immediately west of Grove Street.

The first city slaughterhouse was built in **1851** and remained there, on the site on which Tollcross School now stands, until **1910**, when it was removed to Slateford. That movement was only one of a number changes made at that time and great credit must be bestowed on Lord Provost **Brown** who played a big part in making a goodly part of the city beautiful. It came about in this manner.

**Lothian Road Board School** Source: *1910-11 Minute Books of the Edinburgh School Board, 9 South Castle Street Edinburgh*. The school was built in **1880**; Mr George Robertson, from West Port School, was elected the first Head Master and, incidentally, the last Head Master was Mr Kenneth Whitton, in **1910**.

**Usher Hall** To comply with the terms of Mr Andrew Usher’s bequest of £100,000, in **1896**, it was incumbent upon the Town Council to find a suitable site for the Hall. The chain of events were as follows.

The Minutes of 21<sup>st</sup> March **1910** show that the School Board sold Lothian Road School to the Corporation for £8,500, subject to an annual feu-duty of £97. In turn, the Corporation sold the School Board two acres, or thereby, forming part of the site at Fountainbridge slaughterhouse at £5,242 per acre, subject to the existing feu-duty. Lothian Road School was vacated on 17<sup>th</sup> March **1911**, some pupils going to West Fountainbridge School (an annexe for the New Street School of Building, in 1963). The report concluded that when completed the new school would provide accommodation for 1,100 pupils. The Town Council Minutes for June 29<sup>th</sup> **1910** confirm that Lothian Road School was purchased for £8,500 and £97 feu-duty

**The Canal** The Coliseum was numbered 125 Fountainbridge and at the opposite side of the street stood No. 92, now St Cuthbert's Co-operative Association Ltd., Head Office. In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century a 'Store' bakery was sited to the west of the Office. The canal was adjacent to both Nos 125 and 92. A small wooden hump-back bridge carried the traffic over the canal; this could be raised, in two parts, to allow barges into Port Hamilton (on which site the huge 'Store' Bakery was built between **1921-23**). Eventually an iron drawbridge was built over the canal at the junction of Fountainbridge and Gardener's Crescent; but with the running down of the coal trade on which Port Hamilton depended, the bridge was removed in **1920** and resited at Mill Lane (Gilmore Park) at the Lochrin Basin of the canal.

The canal, however, carried on and under another hump-back bridge into the basin of Port Hopetoun, which was virtually square and was enclosed on the north by Morrison Street, on the east by Lothian Road, on the south by Fountainbridge and on the west by Semple Street. All the premises within that square now stand on the site of the old canal basin, including, of course, one of the leading Picture Houses in the city, namely the *Regal*, now the *ABC*, opened on Monday October 10<sup>th</sup> **1938**, at which I was a guest of the management.

**Gardener's Crescent** This did not become a through road until after the canal was drained and filled up, which would be in line with the building of the 'Store' Bakery. A small foot-path was the only access from Morrison Street to Fountainbridge.

The removal of the slaughterhouse saw the last of live cattle, sheep, etc on the hoof, not only in Fountainbridge, Grassmarket, West Port and Valleyfield Street, but throughout the city.

That, then, is a short piece of history of the district wherein I spent many happy times in the *Collie* and in the Skating Rink prior to the emergence of the Coliseum Picture House.

N Monday, 11 December 1911 Advertisement : “**PROPRIETORS THE COLISEUM (EDIN.) CO. LTD., WEST FOUNTAINBRIDGE, FINEST & LARGEST PICTURE HALL IN EDINBURGH.** Opening Ceremony will take place on Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup> (1911) at 3 o’clock Afternoon, at which Colonel Sir Robert Cranston, K.C.V.O., V.D., LL.D., has kindly consented to preside and to declare the building open to the Public. The Hall will be open to the Public the Same Evening.

Twice nightly 7 & 9 Early doors 6.30 & 8.30. A Spacious and Comfortable Lounge for Early Door Patrons between Performances.

ALL STAR PERFORMANCES PROGRAMME INCLUDES **SAM THOMSON** Edinburgh’s Favourite Scotch Comedian; the Original ‘Postie’ at the King’s Theatre Pantomime 1910-11 **and MISS CISSIE THOMSON** The Hit of Last Year’s Leith Pantomime.

Prices: pit, 3d.; pit stalls, 4d.; balcony stalls, 6d.; family circle, 9d. front rows, 1s.”

In course of time the threepennies became the front rows.

**Opening of the Coliseum Edinburgh (N Friday, 15 December 1911)**

“A transformation has been effected on the interior of the one-time *Grand Roller Skating Rink, Fountainbridge*, the place having been fitted up as a picture-house and opened yesterday under the name of the *Coliseum*. The stage has been fitted up at the south end of the building, and four classes of seats have been erected with spacious promenades on either side, seating accommodation having been provided for 1,500 persons.

The Manager of the entertainment is Mr **Thomas Watt**. Mr. **John Baird** presided over a large number of guests. Sir Robert Cranston said in the course of his Opening Address, “If they did nothing else, amusement promoted temperance amongst the people and those shows were going a

long way to create a better state of society, and money was better spent there than in the public house.” Applause.

A cinematograph display was afterwards given. The Coliseum is the largest picture house in the city.”

**1915** *Kinematograph Year Book* Page 468

“Coliseum, 125 Fountainbridge .Proprietor: Coliseum (Edinburgh) Co., Ltd. Seats, 1,800”

I came across a little snippet in this issue (**ED** Saturday, 13 February **1954**) to the effect that the *Coliseum* had closed in the year **1942**.

***COOKE’S CIRCUS PICTURE PALACE, EAST FOUNTAINBRIDGE***  
See page 52.

***PALLADIUM PICTURE HOUSE, EAST FOUNTAINBRIDGE*** See page 53.

***KING’S CINEMA, 38 HOME STREET (Later the Cameo)***

In the beginning the story of the King’s Cinema was one of frustration and the words of Burns’ certainly apply, “The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men gang aft a-gley.” The work of the scribe, who had a flair for poetry, who framed one of the advertisements almost 50 years ago, is worth recording(**N** Wednesday, 31 December **1913**).

**“THE KING’S CINEMA (ALMOST OPPOSITE THE KING’S THEATRE) HOME STREET, NEW YEAR’S DAY AT 12 NOON. Will open to the Public.**

**A Magnificent Programme of Pictures Has Been Arranged, And The Comfort of Patrons Has Been Fully Insured. Prices of Admission: 6d. and 1s. Children Half-Price to All Parts. New Year’s Day Excepted) to 6 p.m. LADIES’ COSTUME ORCHESTRA”**

**N** Thursday, 1 January **1914**.

***“THE KING’S CINEMA (ALMOST OPPOSITE THE KING’S THEATRE) HOME STREET. OPENING UNAVOIDABLY POSTPONED FOR A FEW***

*DAYS DUE TO LICENCE NOT BEING GRANTED. NOTIFICATION OF OPENING WILL BE GIVEN LATER”*

**N Thursday, 8 January 1914. “KING’S CINEMA (NEAR KING’S THEATRE).**

**GRAND OPENING TODAY (THURSDAY) AT 2.30**

Superlatives Having Been Exhausted As Applied To The City Picture Houses, The Directors Simply Ask The Public To Come And Judge For Themselves.

Prices. 6d. and 1s. Children Half-Price (Afternoons). Continuous performances from 2.30 to 10.45. MADAME EGGER’S LADIES’ COSTUME ORCHESTRA”

Note: The reader may have observed some slight differences in the last two or three advertisements – very slight.

**King’s Cinema (N Tuesday, 13 January 1914)**

The newest of Edinburgh’s many picture houses, the King’s Cinema, Home Street, is already receiving its fair share of public patronage. Last night a large crowd witnessed a lengthy programme and listened to the music of the ladies’ costume orchestra. *The Mystery of the Yellow Astor Mine* is a most sensational picture, and the fight between the miners and the Indians is both picturesque and exciting. Three more dramatic subjects are contained in the bill, and very pathetic and touching is *Till The Day Breaks*. A delightfully pretty travel production and three merry-makers complete a flawless programme.”

**1915 Kinematograph Year Book**

“King’s Cinema, 38 Home Street. Proprietor, Edinburgh & District Cine Theatres Ltd.

Seats, 650”

**N Friday, 15 April 1915**

**“KING’S KINEMA TOLLCROSS, KALEIDOSCOPE KEYSTONE KOMEDIES, KUM KWICK KUM KWICK KUM KWICK”**



**“The Advent of Talking Pictures To The King’s Cinema (N Monday, 28 April 1930)**

“THE KING’S CINEMA (OPPOSITE KING’S THEATRE) TODAY AT 2.30 OPENING CEREMONY OF WESTERN ELECTRIC TALKIES BY LADY MARGARET SACKVILLE. TONIGHT AT 6.30 DOORS OPEN AT 6.

FIRST PERFORMANCE OF THE TALKING, SINGING AND DANCING PICTURE *MARRIED IN HOLYWOOD*. A wonderful Waltz Number *Dance Away The Night*. Talkie Comedies etc.

Admission Prices (Including Tax). Front Stalls, 6d., and 9d.; Back Stalls, 1s., and 1s.3d.”

**King’s Cinema Talkie (N Tuesday, 29 April 29<sup>th</sup> 1930)**

“The latest of the Edinburgh picture houses to go over from the silent films to the ‘talkies’ is the King’s Cinema at Tollcross. By invitation of the directors, a large audience assembled for the inauguration of the ‘talkies’ yesterday afternoon. Mr **Robert Duncan**, solicitor, the managing director of the Edinburgh and District Cinema Theatres Ltd., who presided, said that there were many who would regret the passing of the silent film. But the public demand for the sound film could not be ignored, and it was up to them to meet the public demand.

Lady Margaret Sackville formally declared the installation open. The picture chosen to mark the transference was *Married in Hollywood*.”

Note: As I write, November **1963**, it is nigh on 50 years since the King’s Cinema opened, namely January 8<sup>th</sup> **1914**. I spent many happy nights with my family in the King’s Cinema.

***CAMEO, 38 HOME STREET*** (N Friday, 4 March **1949** Advertisement)

“*CAMEO JOHN R. and J.K.STAFFORD POOLE HAVE PLEASURE IN PRESENTING EDINBURGH’S NEW ART CINEMA, THE CAMEO HOME STREET TOLLCROSS, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC MONDAY, MARCH 7, 1949. CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE DAILY FROM 1.45 p.m.*

OPENING ATTRACTION - MICHELLE MORGAN in *LA SYMPHONIE PASTORALE*, ENGLISH SUB-TITLES”

**New Edinburgh Cinema (S Saturday, 5 March 1949)**

“A preview of the Cameo, Edinburgh’s new specialised cinema, was given to the Press yesterday (Friday). Formerly known as the King’s Cinema, the theatre has been renovated and redecorated, and will be opened officially by Lord Provost Sir Andrew Murray tomorrow night. There is accommodation for approximately 500 people, and it is intended that continuous performances should be given throughout the week.

The directors – Baillie John R and Mr. J. K. Stafford Poole – intend that, in the main, single feature programmes should be run, with short subjects of interest and educational value to supplement the feature film”

**Lord Provost Opens Edinburgh’s New Specialised Cinema (S Monday, 7 March 1949)**

“The Cameo, Home Street, Edinburgh’s new specialised cinema, was officially opened last night (Sunday) by Lord Provost Sir Andrew Murray. A preview was given of the programme which will be shown until March 12: the French film *La Symphonie Pastorale* and a short Swedish film with English commentary *Cliff Face*.

Declaring the cinema open, the Lord Provost said there had been sufficient controversy over the recent Royal concert to prove that tastes differed. “But, generally speaking”, he said, “and without offending the normal box-office appeal, standards could be improved and it is necessary and desirable – among cinema-goers especially – that we should aim at a higher standard of appreciation. I hope that the educational value of this cinema, and the contribution of the films here, will be made available to the children of our city, and that, through the medium of the Cameo, appreciation of what is good and bad in the art of the film may be inculcated into them.”

It was his place, continued the Lord Provost, to invite controversy between Edinburgh and Glasgow, but it had been rather galling for Edinburgh people to have to travel to the west, or even to London, to see some of the films that had furthered the art of the cinema. “You have added to the culture life of the city, and to its status as an International centre”, the Lord Provost told Baillie John R. Poole.

Mr. J.K. Stafford Poole, who with his father, Baillie Poole, is a Director of the Cameo, told the guests at last night’s preview that the success of the French film, *Les Enfants du Paradis* had been partly responsible for the

opening of the new cinema. That film when shown at the Synod Hall during the International Festival had beaten the receipts of many of the British and American films. "I hope this cinema will fill a gap that has existed in Edinburgh for too long," he said.

**1954** *Kinematograph Year Book* Pages 415-416 "Cameo Picture House, Home Street Proprietor: Poole's Cameo, Room 18, Synod Hall, Edinburgh. Prices: 2s.1d. to 4s. Seats, 550.

**Edinburgh Cinema Gets 'Pub' Licence (ED Tuesday, 15 October 1963)**

"The Cameo, Tollcross, today became the only Edinburgh Cinema to have a liquor licence. Edinburgh Licensing Court granted it a public-house licence by 5 votes to 3, despite a suggestion by objectors that this would create 'a most unfortunate precedent'. The application was made by Mr J.K.S.Poole, managing director of Poole's (Cameo), Ltd., Castle Terrace, Edinburgh. Mr Poole assisted his late father in operating a cinema in Aberdeen where bars were available for the benefit of patrons. The Cameo could fairly be described as a friendly, popular and successful cinema. It seats around 500 people. Only people who had bought admission tickets would be served if a licence were granted.

Mr. J. Lindsay Stewart, advocate for the objectors, said, *inter alia*, there were, within 300 yards, 13 public houses."

Note: The opening of the King's Cinema was postponed on Thursday, January 1<sup>st</sup> 1914, "Due to a licence not being granted." Strange but true; see the item on the King's Cinema.

**At Dean Of Guild Court (ED Saturday, 2 November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1963 Page 2)**

"The Court also gave permission for work to start on Edinburgh's first cinema bar, to be installed at the *Cameo Cinema*, Tollcross, at a cost of about £1,000."

***LAURISTON HALL, LAURISTON STREET***

An old friend was quite surprised to learn that for a period the **Lauriston Hall** was, to all intents, a commercial picture house. Indeed, I had to prove it to him. That is the beauty of the Advertisement: it is phrased to suit the wishes of the advertiser and is not, as a rule, at the whim of the editor.

Suffice it to say, my old friend accepted the situation, although he shook his head – whether in sorrow or not I could not determine.

**N Saturday, 21 December 1912**

*“LAURISTON HALL, LAURISTON STREET, TOLLCROSS TELEPHONE – 2472 CENTRAL (NEXT TO THE SACRED HEART) MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, and through the Christmas and New Year Holidays, will be the Resort of the Elite of the City. ANIMATED PICTURES Provided by the Management of the Cinema House, 18 Nicolson Street. Prices: 6d.; 1s.; 1s.6d; and 2s. ALL DAY, CHRISTMAS DAY, FROM 1.30. FASHIONABLE ORCHESTRA.*

**Lauriston Hall (N Tuesday, 31 December 1912)**

*“The pictures at the Lauriston Hall are of a varied character, with much human interest, and, the screen being a big one, the subjects are clearly visible: *The Death Sentence* Drama; *The Spy Mania* Comedy; *Heligoland – or the Gibraltar of Germany*”*

Note: Just one of those things – Heligoland loomed large in the War News of the First and Second World Wars. The heavily fortified island was surrendered to Great Britain on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1945; demilitarised in 1947, that is, the submarine pens were destroyed; and returned to West Germany on March 1<sup>st</sup> 1952.

1915 *Kinematograph Year Book* page 468 “Lauriston Hall, Lauriston Street. Proprietor: Rev J.B. McLuskey.”

***POOLE’S SYNOD HALL, CASTLE TERRACE*** See page 10.

***PRINGLE’S PICTURE PALACE, GROVE STREET*** See page 33.

***REGAL OR A.B.C., LOTHIAN ROAD***

I gave a short account of the neighbourhood in which the Regal stands, in the story about the *Coliseum*. 125 Fountainbridge. Suffice it to say that the Regal stands on part of the old canal basin, known as Port Hopetoun, and was bounded by these streets: Fountainbridge; Lothian Road, Morrison Street; and Semple Street.

**Extracts from a Preview about opening of Regal on Monday, 10 October 1938 (S Saturday, 8 October 1938)**

**“The architects, Messrs. Stewart Kaye & Walls** One is struck on entering the stalls, with the great breadth. (An asset when the ‘New Sound’ was introduced in June 1955). There is all the necessary equipment to meet any requirements for stage entertainments, an orchestra pit has accommodation for 30 musicians.

**No organ** Although it is not intended to install an organ the cinema has up-to-date fittings for an organ.

**Mural pictures** On each side of the stage are large recesses in which special lighting effects produce a changing series of mural pictures (I was always intrigued by these pictures during the intervals).

**Projection equipment** The projection equipment in the new cinema is the first of its kind in the East of Scotland, and the latest sound equipment of **Western Electric** has been installed. The system is one which gives faithful reproduction of sound from the faintest whisper to the loudest roar of a gun.

**Comfort for patrons** Ample space has been allowed between the rows of seats, which have been fitted with sponge arm rests. There is a large air-conditioning plant, and other features of the scheme are a Café and ample cloakroom accommodation. A fireproof operating box has doors opening on to the roof.

**The Owners** The Regal is owned by the **Associated British Cinemas Corporation**, which control about 50 cinemas in Scotland, including the *Ritz*, Rodney Street, the *Lyceum*, Slateford Road, and the *Savoy*, Stockbridge.

**Cost** The Regal was built at an estimated cost of £60,000.

**The Manager** Mr **Thomas Battison**, who has been appointed the resident manager of the Regal, was formerly the manager of the *Cranston Cinema, Glasgow*, and during a period of about 25 years he has been connected with practically every branch of the entertainment industry.

At one time he was manager of a cinema in Peshwar, on the North-West frontier of India, combining with his duties that of taking the money at the door and playing piano accompaniments. One of his amusing recollections is that of the trouble which was caused by a boy assistant who had a disconcerting habit of interrupting the show and repeating any particular part of the film that he liked. Of course, the ‘more enlightened whites’ got over the problem by ‘sitting’ through the entire showing – thus depriving those waiting outside.

**Opening Ceremony & First Picture** Bailie Henry Steele will perform the opening ceremony on Monday afternoon (October 10, 1938). The opening programme will include: *Vessels of Wrath*, with **Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester**, the first production of the Mayflower Corporation.”

N Saturday, 8 October 1938

“THE REGAL      LOTHIAN ROAD      SCOTLAND’S FINEST SUPER  
CINEMA

GRAND OPENING ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 10 1938, AT 2.30 p.m.  
BY BAILIE HENRY STEELE.

CHARLES LAUGHTON AND ELSA LANCHESTER in *VESSELS OF WRATH* (A). ON THE SAME PROGRAMME FRED MACMURRAY AND HARRIET HILLARD in *COCONUT GROVE* (U)

	CIRCLE		STALLS	
PRICES:	FRONT	REAR	FRONT	BACK
EVENING	2s.	1s.6d.	1s.	6d.
HALF PRICES	1s.	9d.	6d.	6d.
AFTERNOONS	1s. 6d.	1s.	1s.	6d.
HALF PRICES	1s.	9d.	6d.	6d.”

**Regal gets ‘new sound’ (ED Friday, 17 June 1955)**

“The latest method of recording film sound-track – **Perspecta Stereophonic Sound** – has been installed at Edinburgh’s Regal Cinema, Lothian Road. At a special preview of the musical *Deep In My Heart*, showing at the cinema next week, -Monday June 20<sup>th</sup> 1955 – members of the Press were given the opportunity of hearing it, and comparing it with other systems already well known.

Unlike the ordinary Stereophonic sound at present in operation in several Edinburgh cinemas, Perspecta does away with auditorium speakers, having

its loudspeakers behind the screen. By reason of their positioning, if an actor in the film being shown moves from left to right, or vice versa, the audience is able to locate the actual sound, instead of merely being conscious that it is there. The Perspecta system, which costs in the neighbourhood of £4,000 to install, can be operated on any type of projector and has separate frequency controls. Thus, both high and low frequencies can be adjusted to suit the acoustics of any auditorium.”

**1954** *Kinematograph Year Book*. Page 415

“Regal Cinema, Lothian Road. Proprietor: Associated British Cinemas, Ltd., 30/31 Golden Square, London, W.1. Seats: 2,757”

***RUTLAND PICTURE HOUSE, CANNING STREET*** (N Thursday, 24 April **1930** Preview)

“The Rutland Cinema, in the Rutland Square district, which opens on Monday first, April 28<sup>th</sup> **1930**, is the latest addition to the more commodious picture houses in the city. The seating accommodation is just over 2,000 and plans permit of further extension if necessary.

There will be several new features in the Rutland – one particular system of interior lighting never hitherto utilised. Altogether 2,000 lights will be employed; the principal shades being four distinct colours. An elaborate switchboard system will allow the grading and blending of the lights. The interior decoration is of a delicate shade of orange, silver and light blue, whilst the entire seating is in old rose colour. The mediaeval panels are placed at each end of the screen, and of such shape that they could be dispensed with in the event of a new wide screen coming into being.

Such is the construction of the new picture house that an uninterrupted view of the screen is obtainable from any seat in the building, the area seating being particularly well adapted for viewing films. The cinema should prove one of the most popular of the **General Theatre Corporation Ltd.**”

**N** Friday, 25 April **1930**

***“THE RUTLAND PICTURE HOUSE TORPHICHEN STREET,  
HAYMARKET PHONE 30502***

CONTINUOUS FROM 2 p.m. SEE PAGE 7 OF THIS ISSUE FOR FULL DETAILS OF THE OPENING MONDAY NEXT OF SCOTLAND'S LATEST AND FINEST PICTURE HOUSE

PAGE 7

OPENING MONDAY NEXT APRIL 28<sup>th</sup> 1030 AT 2.30 p.m.

*THE LOVES OF BURNS* STARRING JOSEPH HISLOP A SCOTTISH TALKIE SENSATION

OPENING CEREMONY TO BE PERFORMED BY SIR WILLIAM LOWRIE SLEIGH, LL. D., D.L.

HOURS AND PRICES: CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE FROM 2 p.m. DOORS OPEN 1.30 p.m. MATINEE TILL 4.30 p.m. 6d., 8d. & 1s. CHILDREN 4d. and 6d.

EVENING, 8d., 1s., 1s.3d. 1s.6d. CHILDREN, 4d. and 8d. (Saturdays excepted)."

Note: Mr **Joseph Hislop** was an Edinburgh man, a scholar of St Mary's Cathedral, Palmerston Place. I knew his father, a house painter; the family lived in Caledonian Crescent, Dalry. Joseph Hislop ultimately took up residence in Sweden or Norway. Yes, Hislop could sing! At the opening **Lyndon Laird** was at the 'Mighty Organ'; and **Norman Austin** led the Rutland Symphony Orchestra.

Three street names are given above in the above advertisements:

1. Torphichen Street; 2. Canning Street; and 3. Rutland Square district.

The picture house stood at the east end of Torphichen Street and the west end of Canning Street.

**1938** *Cinema Buyers' Guide* Page 173

"Rutland Picture House, Canning Street. Proprietor: General Theatre Corporation Ltd.

Seats: 2,138"

The Rutland lost its identity and the last advertisement for it appeared in the *News*, Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> **1950**. "The last programme was: LORRETTA YOUNG, CELESTE HOLM *COME TO THE STABLE (U)* 2.40, 3.45 and 8.55 *SAND* in TECHNICOLOR 4.15 and 7.25."

On March 6<sup>th</sup> **1950** the cinema became known as the **Gaumont**.



## ***GAUMONT, CANNING STREET formerly The Rutland***

Perhaps it was the craze to indulge in the Take-Over that was the reason for so many cinemas changing their names.

**N Saturday, 4 March 1950**

**“GAUMONT NEXT WEEK, FORMERLY THE RUTLAND OPEN 1.30, MONDAY, MARCH 6, 1950 THE NEW JOLSON PICTURE. LARRY PARKS**

**JOLSON SINGS AGAIN (TECHNICOLOR) 2.10, 4.25, 6.40 AND 8.55”**

**1954 Kinematograph Year Book, pages 415-416 “Gaumont, Canning Street. Proprietor: Circuits Management Association Ltd. Albion House, 59 New Oxford Street, London. Prices: 1s.9d. to 3s.1d.”**

### **Gaumont – Odeon Dispatch Christmas Scheme for Children and Old People (S Wednesday, January 1963)**

**“Deputy Editor Ends 52 Years Service, Mr R. H. Leishman** In 1948 Mr Leishman founded the Dispatch Christmas gift scheme for children and old people, in collaboration with Gaumont-Odeon and he personally directed the scheme every Christmas since then.

At a ceremony in the office yesterday (29/1/1963) presided over by Mr **Alaister M. Dunnet**, resident director and editor of *The Scotsman*, Mr **Max McAuslane**, editor of the *Evening Dispatch*, presented gifts to Mr and Mrs Leishman”

I am glad to record that Mr Leishman was never weary in well doing, especially the part he played in association with the Cinema.

### **Gaumont Site Not To be Rebuilt (S Tuesday, 30 April 1963)**

**“Site Will Be Sold** One of Edinburgh’s largest cinemas, which was burned last year (30 May 1962), is not to be rebuilt. The Rank Organisation has decided to dispose of the ruined Gaumont Cinema in Canning Street, and have put up the site for sale.

A Rank Organisation spokesman said yesterday there had been many enquiries about the site. He would give no indication of the price required. The decision not to rebuild the Gaumont leaves only two Rank cinemas in

Edinburgh, the *New Victoria and Regent*, where formerly there were six\*. Consideration was given to redeveloping the Gaumont as an entertainment centre, with dance hall, bowling alley, and cinema. No repair work has been carried out since the fire, and only the walls and the foyer remain standing.

The Gaumont had more than 2,000 seats”

\*The other three were *St Andrew Square Cinema*, Clyde Street, which was not replaced after it was destroyed by fire on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1952; the *New*, No. 56 Princes Street, demolished to make way for Marks and Spencer; the *Capitol*, Manderson Street, Leith, is now a Bingo Hall.

**TOLLCROSS CINEMA, 140 LAURISTON PLACE** (N Friday, 27 December 1912)

**“THE TOLLCROSS CINEMA, LTD. 140 LAURISTON PLACE, OPEN TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31, at 7 p.m. PERFORMANCE CONTINUOUS PROGRAMME. NOTHING BETTER**

PRICES: 4d., 6d., 1s. RESERVED SEAS, 1s.6d. Children Half-Price At All Hours

BOXES May be Reserved for Parties of 4 or more.

PROGRAMME CHANGED MONDAY & THURSDAY”

N Tuesday, 7 January 1913

“The Tollcross cinema, a recent addition to the Edinburgh picture house world, in Lauriston Place, was well patronised yesterday.”

N Saturday, 18 January 1913 The first advertisement to show details of the programme.

“*REMOVING SUNKEN VESSELS* and *BACHELORS’ BUTTONS* With Mr Bunny (Better known as John Bunny)”

**TOLLCROSS CINEMA – SPECIAL NOTICE** (N Thursday, 14 August 1913)

“In connection with Café and Heating System all of which will be completed MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1913. From which date this theatre will be continuous form 3 p.m. to 10.30 p.m. DAILY”

1938 *Cinema Buyers’ Guide* Page 173. “Tollcross Cinema; Lauriston Cinema Ltd. Seats: 670”

In the 1920's I attended a series of lectures given in the *Tollcross Cinema* by **John C Clark**, M.P. for a Glasgow division, on behalf of the Labour College. My impression of the Cinema was one of gloom; it was, without doubt, one of the 'crumiest' houses in the town, with no redeeming feature. In short, it was a dump. It closed during 1942/43, and like many more old picture houses it became a furniture store.

***CINEMATOGRAPH SHOW, OLD CHURCH, WEST PORT, 1901*** (N Tuesday, 31 December 1901)

"Old Church\*, West Port Cinematograph To-night (Tuesday). Price, 3d."

\*The second Chalmers' Church, 1847-1884; a furniture store in 1963

The advertisement is complete, terse and to the point. At that time many church halls were opened during the New Year Festivities simply to attract certain citizens to such a 'show' who might otherwise make 'beasts of themselves' with the aid of John Barleycorn.

I mention a few such 'shows' which were advertised in the Press, supplemented with Bills on church notice boards stating there would be a 'do' in the church hall at such and such a date. Generally an announcement was made from the pulpit intimating the 'do'. Those concerts, cinematograph shows, Punch and Judy, singers, teas and buns, the lot –along with the minister - did much good; I have every reason to know.

## INDEX

***Alhambra Theatre, Grove Street,  
1906, 32***

***Author***

Reminiscences of Central Hall  
Choir and Frank Benson, 36  
Zeppelin raid, 1916, 58

***Benson, Frank Methodist  
minister, 36***

***Bernhardt, Sarah Actress, 30***

***Beverley Cinema, Lauriston  
Street 1954 56***

***Billiard Halls***

Queen's, Thornybauk, 39  
Trevelyan, Fountainbridge, 39

***Blue Halls, Lauriston Street,  
1930, 56***

***Bostock and Wombell's,  
Fountainbridge, 1912, 50***

***Bostock and Wombwell's Circus,  
Fountainbridge, 1912, 50***

***Bostock and Wombwell's  
Menagerie, Grassmarket, 1902,  
49***

***Bostock and Wombwell's, Circus,  
Grassmarket, 1891, 48***

***Bostock's Menagerie,  
Grassmarket, 1894, 48***

***Buchanan, R.C. Managing  
Director, King's, 27***

***Caley, Lothian Road  
Opened 1923, 56***

***Cameo, 38 Home Street, 1949, 65***

***Campbell, Dan Manager of  
Palladium Theatre, 55***

***Carnegie, Andrew laid memorial  
stone, King's, 1906, 27***

***Cassie, Bertha Switchboard  
Operator, King's, 1917-37, 29***

***Catlin's Pierrots***

Synod Hall, 1925, 11

***Central Hall, Tollcross, 35***

First Cinematograph Show,  
1901, 35

Popular Saturday Concerts, 37

***Charity***

Proceeds from film shown in  
Lyceum, 1912, given to  
Mansion House Fund Titanic  
Fund, 23

Proceeds from performance of  
Rob Roy, Lyceum, 1884,  
given to John Heslop, 22

***Cinema House, 18 Nicolson St.***

Supplied films to Lauriston Hall,  
Lauriston Street, 68

***Cinemas, 74***

Beverley, Lauriston Street, 56  
Blue Halls, Lauriston Street, 56  
Caley, Lothian Road, 56

Cameo, 38 Home Street, 65

Central Hall, Tollcross, 35

Coliseum, 125 Fountainbridge,  
62

Cooke's Circus Picture Palace,  
East Fountainbridge, 52

Crumiest - Tollcross cinema, 75

Gaumont, Canning Street,  
formerly the Rutland, 73

King's Cinema, 38 Home Street,  
63

Lauriston Hall, Lauriston Street,  
67

Old Church, West Port, 75

Palladium, East Fountainbridge,  
53

- Poole's Synod Hall  
 Pringle's Picture Palace, Grove Street, 33  
 Public house licence granted to Cameo, 1963, 67  
 Regal, Lothian Road, 68  
 Rutland Picture House, Canning Street, 71  
 Tollcross Cinema, 140 Lauriston Place.
- Cinematograph Act, 36***
- Circuses, 16***
- Bostock and Wombell's, Fountainbridge, 1912, 50  
 Bostock and Wombwell's, Grassmarket, 48, 49  
 Bostock's Menagerie, Grassmarket, 1894, 48  
 Bostock's and Wombwell's Men. Grassmarket, 1902 49  
 Cooke's Circus Picture Palace, Fountainbridge, 1908, 52  
 Cooke's Circus, Lothian Road, 1835, 41  
 Cooke's Royal Circus, Grindlay Street 42  
 Cooke's Royal Circus, Fountainbridge, 44  
 Cooke's, Lothian Road, 1835, 41  
 Edmond's, Grassmarket, 48  
 Electric light, Bostock and Wombell's, 1891, 48  
 Itinerary, Cooke's Great Circus, 1881, 44  
 John Henry Cooke's New Royal Circus, East Fountainbridge, 1886, 44  
 Pinder's, Fountainbridge, 50  
 Royal Italian, Fountainbridge, 49
- Coliseum, 125 Fountainbridge, 1911, 62***
- Cooke's Circus Picture Palace, Fountainbridge, 1908, 52***
- Cooke's Circus, Lothian Road, 1835, 16***
- Cooke's Great Circus, Itinerary 1881, 44***
- Cooke's, John Henry, New Royal Circus, East Fountainbridge, 1886 - 1911, 44***
- Cooke's Circus Last Programme 1910, 46***
- Cooke's Circus, Lothian Road, 1835, 41***
- Cooke's Royal Circus, Grindlay Street, 1877 - 1883, 42***
- Cruickshank, A. Stewart Owner of King's, 28***
- Dempsey v Carpentier, film, Synod Hall, 1921, 11***
- Edinburgh Corporation***
- Agreed to Mr Oppenheim's proposal for redevelopment of Lyceum-Castle Terrace site, 1963, 25  
 Bought Synod Hall Buildings from U.P. Church, 1902, 8
- Edinburgh Film Guild Presented films on Sundays in the Caley Cinema, 59***
- Edinburgh Theatre, Castle Terrace, 1875-1877, 7***
- Edmond's Circus, Grassmarket, 1881, 48***
- Electric light Bostock and Wombell's, 1891, 48***

*Entertainment Tax, introduced during 1914-18 War, 34*  
*Evan's Carnival, Ponton Street, 1911, 50*

*Finlay, Alec Comedian, Palladium Theatre, 55*  
*Fires*

Garrick Theatre, Grove Street, 1921, 34

*Garrick Theatre, Grove Street, 1917, 33*

*Gaumont (formerly Rutland), Canning Street, 1950, 73*

*Grand Roller Skating Rink, West Fountainbridge, 1909*

*Grassmarket Article by Councillor Wilson McLaren, 49*

*Harmony Nights, Thursdays and Fridays Poole's, Synod Hall, 1928, 12*

*Hislop, Joseph Singer, The Loves of Burns film, 72*

*Holt, Ned Manager of Wombell's Menagerie, 49*

*Irving, Sir Henry 20, 21*

*King's Cinema, 38 Home Street opened January 8th 1914, 63*

*King's Theatre, Leven Street Opened December 8th 1906, 27*

*Lauriston Hall, Lauriston Street Films provided by Cinema House, 18 Nicolson Street, 68*

*Lauriston Hall, Lauriston Street, 1912, 67*

*Ledingham, Cora Grand-daughter of John Henry Cooke, 40*

*Lighting, Electric, Lyceum 1883, 18*

*Lochrin Ice Pond, Tollcross, 1912, 50*

*Lumiere Brothers, pioneers in cinematography*

Talk by John Poole, 13 January 1939, 13

*Lyceum Theatre, Grindlay Street Opened 1883, 16*

*MacCrae, Duncan Comedian/Actor Palladium Theatre, 55*

*Maclea, Lex Comedian, Palladium Theatre box-office record holder, 55*

*McLaren, Councillor Wilson, 49*

*New Pavilion Theatre, Grove Street, 1897, 31*

*Olav, King of Norway Present at Lyceum with Queen Elizabeth for Rob Roy, 1962, 23*

*Old Church, West Port Cinematograph Show, 1901, 75*

*Oppenheim, Myer Reached agreement with Edinburgh Corporation, 1963, 25*

*Pall, Popular name given to Palladium Theatre, 55*

***Palladium Picture House, East Fountainbridge, 1912, 53***  
***Palladium Theatre, East Fountainbridge, 1933, 55***  
***Patent Ring Mat, used by Cooke's Circus, 1886, 45***  
***Pavilion Theatre, Grove Street, 1897, 31***  
***Pavilion Theatre, Grove Street***  
 Known as the 'Piv', 32  
***Pinder's Circus, Fountainbridge, 1932, 50***  
***Piv, short for Pavilion Theatre, Grove Street, 32***  
***Poole, J.K. Stafford, 14***  
***Poole's, Synod Hall, 10***  
 100 per cent Talkie Programme, *Speakeasy*, 29 July 1929, 12  
 Article, Pioneer Work on the Talkies, 14  
 Cinematograph Show, first 1906, 10  
 City has no record of when Poole's first rented the Hall., 10  
 First advert. to carry prices of admission, 1908, 11  
 Harmony Nights, Thursdays and Fridays, 1928, 12  
 John R. Poole's No 1 Myriorama, 1907, 10  
 Nearly £6,000 spent on Super Talkies equipment, 12  
 New Orchestra, director Samuel Rodgers 1928, 11  
 Opening of Picture Season, 27 August 1928, 11  
 Panstereorama, 1920, 11  
 Photograph of staff and Poole's motor car, 1907, 10

Presentations to Messrs Campbell and Hoggard, and Miss Hull, 1961, 14  
 Reseated and Redecorated. 1923, 11  
***Prince of Wales Theatre, Grove Street, 1906, 32***  
***Pringle, Ralph***  
 North American Picture Company, Synod Hall 1907, 10  
***Pringle's Picture Palace, Grove Street, 1908 - 17, 33***  
***Public House Licence Cameo first cinema to be granted a licence, 1963, 67***  
  
***Queen's Billiard Hall, Thornybank, 39***  
  
***Regal, Lothian Road***  
 Opened 10 October 1938, 68  
***Royal Italian Circus, Fountainbridge, 1907, 49***  
***Rutland Picture House, Canning Street***  
 Opened 28 April 1930, 71  
  
***Showgrounds***  
 Evan's Carnival, Ponton Street, 1911, 50  
 Gardener's Crescent, 50  
 Gibson Terrace, 1900, 48  
***Skating Rinks***  
 Grand Roller Skating Rink, West Fountainbridge, 1909, 51  
 Lochrin Ice Pond, Tollcross, 1912, 50  
***Smoking Strictly Prohibited, Cooke's Circus, 1886, 45***

***Stewart, Andy Comedian/Singer  
Palladium Theatre, 55***

***Synod Hall, Castle Terrace***

Bought by Edinburgh

Corporation from U.P.

Church, 1902, 8

Catlin's Pierrots, 1925, 11

Concert given on 26 January  
1912, 11

Dempsey v. Carpentier, film  
1921, 11

Methodist West End Mission,  
1890-1901, 35

Poole's became permanent  
tenants, 1929, 12

Ralph Pringle's North American  
Picture Company, 1907, 10

### ***Talkies***

First trials in 1902 John Poole 13  
January 1939, 13

First talking films, 1926  
John Poole 1939, 13

Graham Moffat's *Till the Bells  
Ring*, reputed to be first real  
talkie shown in Edinburgh, by  
Poole's in 1926, 13

### ***Theatres***

Alhambra, Grove Street, 32

Edinburgh Theatre, Castle  
Terrace, 7

Garrick, Grove Street, 33

King's, Leven Street, 27

Lyceum, Grindlay Street, 16

NewPavilion, Grove Street, 31

Palladium, East Fountainbridge,  
1933, 55

Pavilion, Grove Street, 31

Prince of Wales, Grove Street,  
32

***Titanic, Benefit performances for  
dependants, Lyceum, 1912, 23***

***Tollcross Cinema, 140 Lauriston  
Place***

Opened 31 December 1912, 74

***Transport arrangements for  
theatre patrons***

Edinburgh Theatre, 1875, 8

Lyceum Theatre, 1883, trains  
and tram cars, 19

***Trevelyan Billiard Hall,  
Fountainbridge, 39***

***United Presbyterian Church***

Bought Edinburgh Theatre,  
Castle Terrace, 1877, 8

Sold Synod Hall Buildings to  
Edin. Corporation, 1902, 8

***Usher Hall, Lothian Road, 1914,  
37***

***Willis, Dave Comedian  
Palladium Theatre, 55***

***Wood, Wee Georgie Comedian,  
28***