

**PLACES OF
ENTERTAINMENT
IN EDINBURGH**

Part 5

**MORNINGSIDE, CRAIGLOCKHART,
GORGIE AND DALRY,
CORSTORPHINE AND MURRAYFIELD,
PILTON, STOCKBRIDGE AND CANONMILLS,
ABBEYHILL AND PIERSHILL,
DUDDINGSTON, CRAIGMILLAR.**

ARE CIRCUSES ON THE WAY OUT?

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

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ARE CIRCUSES ON THE WAY OUT IN EDINBURGH?

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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 the localities within Edinburgh. Naturally, my first effort was about The South Side. Other Parts already published are: Part 2, Tollcross and its environs; Part 3, Leith; Part 4, Portobello; Part 6, Princes Street and the Top of the Walk. Part 5 originally dealt with Stockbridge and Canonmills but has been augmented to include places of entertainment in the rest of Edinburgh; for consistency with the other Parts, these are arranged in localities; I have also included in the revised Part 5 a note by my father about the viability of circuses in Edinburgh. Thus all of the places of entertainment contained in *Edinburgh Theatres, Cinemas and Circuses 1820-1963*, are now available in Parts 1-6, in A5 format.

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*; William Hutchison's *Tales and Traditions of Leith*; 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: 14, 23, 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*; **LPA:** *Leith Burghs Annual*; **LBP:** *Leith Burghs Pilot*; **LO:** *Leith Observer*

My personal comments are shown in square brackets [].

George F. Baird
November 2001

MORNINGSIDE

SPRINGVALLEY CINEMA, 12 SPRINGVALLEY GARDENS

EN Thursday, 1 January 1931

“SPRINGVALLEY CINEMA, MORNINGSIDE

THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd JANUARY

SPECIAL ATTRACTION

With JOHN BOLES AND CARLOTTA KING in

THEIR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT *THE DESERT SONG*

THE ENORMOUSLY SUCCESSFUL PLAY

APPROXIMATE TIMES OF SHOWING: 2.15, 4.30, 6.15 & 9 P.M.

DOORS OPEN at 1.45 p.m. EACH DAY”

There were no further advertisements for the next three months; I did not look beyond Saturday, March 28th 1931.

1938 *Cinema Buyers' Guide* Page 173

“Springvalley Cinema, Morningside.

Proprietor: Scottish Cinema & Variety Theatres Ltd. Seats: 400.”

12 SPRINGVALLEY GARDENS, MORNINGSIDE SITE AND ITS SEVERAL CINEMAS

I give below a list in chronological order of all the cinemas mentioned in connection with the Springvalley Gardens site.

1. Morningside Picture House , opened December 19th 1912.
2. Ritz Kinema, opened October 1913.
3. Morningside Photo Playhouse, entry found in 1915 Kine. Year Book
4. Evan's Picture House, opened December 19th 1914.
5. Morningside Cinema, opened December 27th 1915
6. Cine Playhouse, entry found in 1920/21 Street Directory.
7. Springvalley Cinema, opened January 1st 1931.

The last mention of a cinema in the Street Directory was in 1937; it seems likely that the arrival of the Dominion in January 1938 put paid to the small Springvalley cinema. The premises were subsequently used as the *Silver Slipper* ballroom.

DOMINION, NEWBATTLE TERRACE, CHURCHILL

EN Saturday, 19 June 1937

“The Edinburgh Dean of Guild Court have granted warrant for the erection of a new picture house at Newbattle Terrace, Morningside Road.

The application was by Mr **William M. Cameron**. The cinema will seat 1,500 and the cost is estimated about £25,000. It is hoped to open in the autumn. It will incorporate all the newest features in cinema construction.

An effort will be made to achieve the best acoustic properties, and a new type of lighting will be introduced. The architect is Mr **T. Bowhill Gibson**. F.R.A.I.S.

EN Saturday, 29 January 1938

**“THE DOMINION NEWBATTLE TERRACE, CHURCHILL
EDINBURGH’S LATEST DE LUXE CINEMA THEATRE
OPENS ON MONDAY FIRST, at 2.30 p.m. JANUARY 31, 1938
*HIS AFFAIR***

**Prices: Balcony, 1s., Stalls, 9d., Front Stalls, 6d.
Matinee Prices till 4 p.m.”**

EN Tuesday, 1 February 1938 Page 8

A large picture of the Dominion appeared in the above issue of the News, showing a painter putting the finishing touches on the exterior.

ED Friday, 28 January 1938 Advertisement

“The Dominion To Open On Monday (Monday January 31 1938)

It is estimated that only 16 weeks’ building time has been necessary for the erection of the Dominion Cinema, at the estimated cost of £25,000. Seating capacity between 1,300 and 1,400, two-thirds of which is in the Stalls.

A New Trend The lighting system by Walters & Co., London, is on very modern lines. Three basic colours are used, red, blue and green, with the three colours hundreds of shade variations can be used.

There are two **Ross projectors**, and the sound is **R.C.A. High Fidelity de Luxe**, incorporating the new **Shearer Multihorn**, an invention of Norma Shearer's brother

The owners of the cinema are **Granada Cinemas (Edinburgh) Ltd.** The promoter is captain **W.M. Cameron**, managing director of the company. Capt. Cameron, who will himself act as manager, has been associated with the cinema trade in Edinburgh for 12 years, with the *Lyceum* and the *Carlton*. The chief operator is Mr **Peter McGregor**. The cinema will open with *His Affair*, starring **Robert Taylor and Barbara Stanwyck**, *I Cover the World*, will also be shown, starring **John Wayne and Don Barclay**.

1954 Kinematograph Year Book, pages 415-416

“Dominion, Churchill

Proprietor: N.M.Cameron, 15 Durham Drive, Portobello.

Seats: 1,369. Proscenium, 36 feet. Screen, 20 feet by 18 feet

Prices: 1s.6d. to 2s.5d.”

S Wednesday, 30 January **1963**.

“Cinema Celebrates Silver Jubilee

The Dominion Cinema, Edinburgh, celebrates its Silver Jubilee on Saturday with a morning performance showing *The Castaways*, for 600 crippled children, and with a staff dance at night. The cinema built by the late William Cameron, aims at family audiences and never shows an ‘X’ film, a policy which has established a regular patronage of 8,000 a week. [When I was a pupil at Boroughmuir School we were taken to the Dominion in 1945/46 to see the film about the freeing of Belsen Concentration Camp; it may not have been rated ‘X’- it certainly was ‘horrific’. G.F.B.]

The co-directors are Mr Cameron's son Derek and Mrs Cameron, his widow, who yesterday presented a tape recorder and refrigerator to Mr **William McLean**, chief projectionist, and a television set to Mrs **Lena Taylor**, chief usherette, in recognition of their 25 years' service.”

CHURCH TO BE THEATRE
MORNINGSIDE HIGH CONVERSION AGREED, 1963
[Subsequently named *The Church Hill Theatre* G.F.B.]

S Friday, 26 July **1963** page 13

“The adaptation of a disused Edinburgh church as a theatre and art centre, at a cost of over £70,000, was approved by Edinburgh at Town Council yesterday. The former Morningside High Church, bought last year after the *Little Theatre* (Pleasance - University Settlement) ceased to be available, will be converted to a 440 seat theatre suitable for amateur and professional productions.

When bought, it was estimated that the capital expenditure would be £50,000, including the purchase price of £6,500. A scheme was submitted but at an estimated cost of £80,607. A revised scheme with an estimated cost of £70,607 which would provide the theatre, a hall suitable for bazaars, badminton and dancing, and a modern three-bedroom house for a caretaker, was put forward to the Council for approval by the Lord Provost’s Committee.

Councillor **R. Smith** moved remittal, which was withdrawn when Lord Provost **Duncan Weatherstone** said the scheme did not exclude what might happen at a later date. Mr **James Gallacher**, chairman of the Arts Centre of Edinburgh Ltd. - a company set up by amateur groups in the City - expressed delight at the decision and predicted it would bring fresh life to the amateur theatre in the city.

Mr **W. Gordon Smith**, a BBC's television producer and vice chairman of the Arts Centre, said the decision was virtually the ‘last chance’ for amateurs in Edinburgh.

CRAIGLOCKHART

CRAIGLOCKHART SAFETY PONDS

S Saturday, 22 January 1881

“CRAIGLOCKHART SAFETY PONDS

SNOW REMOVED - ICE IN SPLENDID CONDITION

ADMISSION: 1s.; AFTER 5 O’CLOCK, 6d.

ILLUMINATED”

Unfortunately there was no mention of the type of illumination used.

EN&D Wednesday, 5^h August 1964

In *Here’s Your Answer!*, it was stated that the Pond was built by **Mr Cox**, of the *Royal Gymnasium*, for skating and curling. [Mention is made on page 51, *Stockbridge and Canonmills*, that Robert Cox, who had glue and hide works at Gorgie Mills, conceived the idea of constructing a recreation ground at Fettes Row. It opened in 1865 as *The Royal Patent Gymnasium* G.F.B.]

CRAIGLOCKHART PONDS

EN Saturday, 21 December 1935

“HAPPY VALLEY (SAFETY POND)

SKATING TODAY

“SCOTLAND’S FINEST OUTDOOR RINK”

FLOODLIGHTING MUSIC

OPEN 10 till 10.30 ADMISSION 1s.

SKATES FOR HIRE

SUNDAY 10 till 10 (FROST HOLDING)

CONDITIONS BEING FAVOURABLE LARGE POND WILL BE OPEN”

G O R G I E A N D D A L R Y

***GORGIE ENTERTAINMENTS, TYNECASTLE PARISH CHURCH,
1905***

EN Monday, 2 January 1905

**“Gorgie Entertainments Tynecastle Parish Church Hall at 8 p.m.
Royal Bioscope, Animated Pictures etc.”**

The purpose: part of the New Year Festivities.

***HAYMARKET PICTURE HOUSE, 90 DALRY ROAD (afterwards The
Scotia)***

According to my research the Haymarket was the first purpose-built Picture House in Edinburgh .

EN Saturday, 7 December 1912

**“HAYMARKET DALRY ROAD
OPENING NIGHT - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1912
TWICE NIGHTLY 7 & 9
Prices: 2d., 4d., 6d.
PROGRAMME CHANGED TWICE WEEKLY”**

EN Tuesday, 17 December 1912

“This picture house, which opened last week, is doing exceedingly well in the Dalry district, and an excellent programme was witnessed by two large audiences last night. *The Prison Ship* is the star film for the earlier part of the week. It deals with an incident in the American War of Independence, showing the treatment aboard the prison ship, and with the usual romance interwoven. Another fine drama is *The Double Cross*, while *Bill Becomes A Sailor* and *The Stubbornness of Youth* provide an abundance of amusement. *In the Parks of Paris* is a fine travel picture.”

Quite a lot to pack into two hours!

EN Tuesday, 24 December 1912

“Haymarket Picture House This picture house is now firmly established in public favour. The pictures submitted are of a high standard of merit; the subjects varied and interesting.”

1915 *Kinematograph Year Book* page 468

“Haymarket Picture House, 90 Dalry Road.
Proprietor: Edinburgh Haymarket Picture House Ltd.”
As will be shown under *Scotia* it seated 638.

For several years, to my knowledge, the Haymarket had a *Friday Night Sing Song*, at which members of the audience were invited to do a turn. Friday nights in the 1920's generally had the “House Full” notice at the Pay Box.

EN Saturday, 28 March 1931

**“Haymarket Dalry Road
Installed The Most Perfect Talking Picture Known to Science
Song of the Flame”**

SCOTIA, 90 DALRY ROAD (FORMERLY THE HAYMARKET)

EN Monday, 29 August 1949

**“THE SCOTIA CINEMA DALRY ROAD
(FORMERLY THE HAYMARKET)**

**PRESENTS AS A SPECIAL OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT
THAT EPIC OF SCOTTISH HISTORY**

BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE

**STARRING DAVID NIVEN and MARGARET LEIGHTON
ON**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1st 1949 - AT 6.15 p.m.

DOORS OPEN - 5.45 p.m.”

1954 Kinematograph Year Book Pages 415 –416

“Scotia, 90 Dalry Road.

Proprietor: Edinburgh Haymarket Picture House, Ltd., 23 Walker Street, Edinburgh. Seats: 638. Proscenium Width: 22 feet.

Prices: 1s. and 1s.9d.”

For 50 years the cinema at 90 Dalry Road carried on with little to report. Except for re-decorating it opened week after week – until the dreaded cry of alarm **Fire!** was once more raised.

S Wednesday, 31 October **1962**

“Because of a fire in the auditorium yesterday, the Scotia Cinema, Dalry Road, Edinburgh, may be closed for three months. Four fire engines brought the fire under control in half an hour. Mr **Alexis King**, the cinema’s managing director, said he had not so far been able to assess the damage, which was to seating and the foyer. The cinema was closed at the time.”

The Scotia re-opened on Monday January **1963**; it closed down on Saturday, February 29th **1964**.

TIVOLI PICTURE HOUSE, 52 GORGIE ROAD

EN Thursday, 26 August **1913**

“PRELIMINARY ANNOUNCEMENT

TIVOLI, TYNECASTLE

ARDMILLAN TERRACE CAR TERMINUS

THIS UP-TO-DATE PICTURE HOUSE

WILL BE OPENED ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 1913

LATEST PICTURES & VARIETIES

TWICE NIGHTLY AT 7 AND 9

ADMISSION: 2d., 4d. & 6d.

MATINEES EVERY SATURDAY at 2.30

ADMISSION: 1d., 2d. & 3d.”

Car Terminus: From **1910** Electric Trams were **towed** from Shrubhill Depot to Ardmillan Terrace, which ran from there to Slateford. This continued until the night of 19th and 20th October **1922**, when poles (still there in **1963**) were erected in the middle of Princes Street, thus making the route to Slateford all electric.

EN Tuesday, 2 September 1913

**“OPENING OF THE TIVOLI PICTURE HOUSE
BY JUDGE STEVENSON**

The Tivoli Picture House, Tynecastle, the latest addition to the ever-increasing number of cinema theatres in Edinburgh, was formally opened last night. The building which will accommodate 600 persons, has been erected on the site of the old Toll House in Gorgie Road, and has a handsome stone frontage. It has a spacious, lofty and well-ventilated auditorium, while for colder weather a heating system has been installed. In the interior decorations, cream is the dominant colour, and gives the theatre a bright appearance. The operating box, in which there are installed two of the latest types of projectors, is a spacious compartment situated outside the theatre altogether, thereby minimising the risk of an outbreak of fire.

EDINBURGH JUDGE ON THE PICTURE HOUSE

Judge Stevenson, who performed the opening ceremony, was introduced by Mr **R.Raymond**, one of the Directors. He was also accompanied to the platform by Bailie Rose and Councillor Archbold. Judge Stevenson congratulated the proprietors on their enterprise in erecting such a comfortable theatre, and wished them every success in their venture. The picture house in Edinburgh, he continued, was a comparatively modern institution, but it had met with such remarkable success that today there was not a district in the city that had not got at least one.

Recently an eminent Cabinet Minister at a concert in Wales spoke about the dreariness of village life, and said that he did not wonder that so many villagers come to town. Those who were familiar with city life know that there were many thousands in Edinburgh, and in every large city, who lived in dreary surroundings. It was the natural desire on the part of both villagers and townspeople to take as much sunshine as possible out of life, and that was really the main source of the success of the picture house.

Personally, he welcomed that picture house, because it seemed to combine amusement with instruction (applause). The ever increasing prosperity of the working-classes had within recent years brought within their reach an opportunity of securing a reasonable amount of enjoyment, and if in the past they had spent more on amusement pure and simple, he thought

cinematograph had come to remedy that defect (applause). There were many thousands in Edinburgh, to whom the charm of visiting the cities of the Continent and elsewhere must be a sealed book, but they had in the picture houses pictures depicting scenes from other countries, and incidents that were of world-wide interest, all for the expenditure of a few pence.

Bailie Rose also spoke, and on the call of Mr Raymond, three hearty cheers were given to the municipal representatives of the ward.

The chief picture was an absorbing drama entitled, *Till Death Do Us Part*. An amusing subject was *An Aeroplane Affair*

Miss **Agnes Hazel**, soprano, gave delightful renderings of well-known songs, while **King and Carson**, comedians and dancers, kept the house in merriment with their smart patter

There will be a complete change of pictures on Thursday, star item, *In Spite of All.*”

JUDGE STEVENSON’S REMARKS, 1913

It is well to include, in full, the remarks of Judge Stevenson, later Lord Provost of Edinburgh. He was in business as a jeweller and watchmaker in Earl Grey Street. Bailie Rose was in business as a grocer in Morrison Street, opposite Grove Street. I wonder whether ‘things’ have really improved in the 50 years since **1913**.

1915 *Kinematograph Year Book* Page 468

“Tivoli, Gorgie Road.

Proprietor: Robertson & Raymond.

Seats: 580”

EN Tuesday, 9 September **1913** Excerpt

“...This comfortable establishment at Gorgie Road has become well established in public favour, and large crowds are attending nightly.

The chief item for the earlier part of the week is *Gambling Mania* along with *A Cheyenne Brave*.”

There was no end to the supply of *Red Injuns* films, and since the introduction of TV the ‘Brave’ and his family has prospered and multiplied.

Well, well the 'Braves' live to fight another day – it is a pity **real war** could not be fought under similar conditions, then we would not have a Remembrance Day to commemorate near one million dead in the First World War. It is a passing thought.

I append some Bits and Pieces from an article which appeared in the **News** of Saturday March 20th **1954**, much of which I can confirm from my own remembrance.

“The original **Tivoli**, or **Tiv**, was opened on September 2nd **1913**, on the site of Begbie's Farm and Dairy (this was adjacent to the Toll G.B.)

Among other members of the Company in those days was Heart of Midlothian's famous internationalist, **Bobby Walker**, the founder of the business being **John Robertson** father of the present director.

In common with other cinemas at that time, the Tivoli divided its programme between stage and screen, several variety artists later reaching fame – **Will Fyffe**, the **Houston Sisters**, **Harry Gordon** and **Tommy Lorne** for example.

The 'orchestra' was a lone lady pianist, who adapted the repertoire to the mood of the film. This was common in most 'little houses' in the city

Booing and hissing at places of entertainment were the accepted thing then, whether for a 'rotten turn' on stage, a breakdown in the film, a frequent occurrence in those days, or just a general hatred of the 'villain of the piece' who, in those days, always looked a villain.

And then there was the burly 'chucker out'. A busy man this, especially if the 'Herts' [This was, and still is, the way 'Hearts' is pronounced by some of the support, the 'ea' is pronounced as the 'e' in 'egg'. G.F.B.] were beaten, either at home or away – it was an occasion to cause a 'barney'. Despite nuts being cracked and sometimes tossed about, paper bags being rustled and often blown and burst, causing a loud bang, the show carried on. Another disturbance was talking (I think the writer erred when he wrote 'talking', it was 'shouting' as I remember it) between patrons separated by several rows and often a bit of horse-play, all designed to make the 'chucker-out' work for his money.

Often the theatre after a break for a 'turn', or to repair a film, would be plunged into darkness for a moment or two. It was this that frequently saved the 'leaders of the noisy section from being caught in the "act".'

Once in a while one of the 'gang' would suddenly burst open the Exit door by banging the Bar; this was the signal for a number of 'boys' waiting in the lane to dash inside. The 'chuckers out' were on a piece of cheese when this happened – as the lights would go on and all those standing were immediately thrown out."

Bobby Walker. He was, without doubt, the greatest inside-forward in Great Britain. By 1913 his playing days were drawing to a close, but I had the pleasure of watching him during the first decade of the 20th Century. In consequence I know the *Old Tiv* very well; I only stopped going to Tynecastle Park in 1963/64 Season because of war injuries.

AID TO READING

In the days of the 'silent pictures' a continuous ribbon or caption would 'follow' or accompany the 'ongans' of the players on the screen. This led, from the initial stages of the captions to the audience, in mass, reading aloud every word. Did this, then, lead to better reading skills?

Reading aloud, did not annoy anyone in those days; nor, for that matter, did children running up and down the gangways cause an annoyance. Changed days, however, came to the cinema, starting in **1929** when Al Jolson appeared on the screen, or scene. Patrons who talked during the 'talkies' were sharply reminded to 'Shut up!'. From 1929 the Deaf or Hard of Hearing were the greatest sufferers. So there was something to be said for silent pictures.

DISORDERLY PATRONS - COURT CASE

The follow case was extracted from the **1915** *Kinematograph Year Book* Page 25.

"EDINBURGH – DEFENDANT: JOHN IMRIE

CHARGE: Behaving in a disorderly manner in the Tivoli Picture House. Prisoner and a number of other young men whistled and shouted and stamped their feet, and threatened to wreck the premises. They were ejected and given into custody.

Result: Fine of 5s."

The date given in the Year Book was 'February 5'; I assume this relates to the year 1914; the Year Book being issued in 1915.

This case is given to show that we have always had 'problem' youths; but I have no doubt that John Imrie and his fellow 'gangsters', if one could so describe them, answered the call for the First World War; likewise, the youth of today would not be found wanting should the need arise – God Forbid.

The story of the Tivoli was simply one of countless 'little houses' throughout Edinburgh and up and down the country. They were Happy Days before the First World War; the world never seems to have recovered from that awful period.

NEW TIVOLI CINEMA, GORGIE ROAD (Formerly The Tivoli)

S Tuesday, 2 January 1934

“NEW EDINBURGH CINEMA

A demonstration in the advance of sound recording and reproduction was included in a private performance which was held to mark the opening of the *New Tivoli Cinema, Gorgie Road*, Edinburgh. Various sounds recorded by the **R.C.A. Photophone system** were reproduced through the **B.T.H. (British Thomson Houston) high frequency extended range reproducer**. They included orchestral excerpts, dialogue, and natural sounds such as running water, and proved a revelation of the strides which have proved that developments have been made along the path to sound perfection. The purity and fidelity of the sounds was a tribute to British enterprise. An interesting feature of the programme was a film of the demolition of the old *Tivoli*, and the erection on the same site of the new building.

It was accompanied by a running commentary, a microphone by means of which the audience can be addressed being installed in the theatre, and cast an interesting sidelight on the amount of local labour used in the erection of the building

The *New Tivoli* opened with *King of the Jungle*, a film of animal life, with **Buster Crabbe** as the star.”

S Tuesday, 30 August 1938

“EDINBURGH CINEMA’S SILVER JUBILEE

The New Tivoli, Tynecastle, Edinburgh, celebrates this week its silver jubilee. Opened on September 2nd 1913, the cinema is one of the oldest buildings in the city to be used continuously as a picture house.

Sound equipment was introduced in 1929. Some five years later (January 1st 1934) the cinema was extended and became the New Tivoli. During the past four and a half years, **admissions** to the cinema have totalled over **five millions**.

Mr **J.C.Robertson** is at present managing director, and the manager is Mr **A.S.Albin**, Chairman of the Edinburgh Section of the Cinematograph Exhibitors’ Association.”

1938 *Cinema Buyers’ Guide* Page 173

“Tivoli, New - Mrs E Robertson. Seats, 1,300” (Compared with the 580 seats in the old Tivoli)

1954 *Kinematograph Year Book* Pages 415-416

“New Tivoli Picture House, Gorgie Road
Seats: 1,200. Prices: 1s.6d. to 2s.3d.
Screen: 23 feet by 18 feet. Stage: 25 feet.
Proscenium, Width 38 feet. Six Dressing Rooms.”

The New Tivoli was taken over by **J. B. Milne Theatres, Dundee**, on February 20th 1961: see *The Scotsman* report of February 16th 1961 under the *Astoria*.

LYCEUM CINEMA, SLATEFORD ROAD

EN Saturday, 6 November 1926

“THE LYCEUM CINEMA, SLATEFORD ROAD

6.30 CONTINUOUS 10.30 SATURDAYS 10.30

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT

Monday, 8TH NOVEMBER (1926) at 2.30 P.M.

THE RT. HON. LORD PROVOST STEVENSON WILL OPEN THIS THEATRE

AN OUTSTANDING PROGRAMME WILL BE SUBMITTED INCLUDING: *THE GREATER GLORY* Featuring Conway Tearle, Anna Q. Nillson, &c.

Supported by *TOO MUCH WIFE* a brilliant comedy drama featuring Wanda Hawley

THE LYCEUM SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA will be under the direction of **MR. HERBERT MORE** of Broadcasting Fame.

Note: Net Proceeds of the Opening Performance will be Entirely Devoted to Charity.

Prices: Stalls, 9d., Balcony 1s.3d”

EN Tuesday, 9 November 1926

“Lyceum Cinema This new picture house has made a convincing start. Two thoroughly good films were shown this week. *The Greater Glory*, featuring Conway Tearle, and Anna Q. Nillson and Wanda Hawley in *Too Much Wife*.”

1954 *Kinematograph Year Book* pages 415-416

“Lyceum Cinema, Slateford Road

Proprietor: Associated British Cinemas, Ltd., 30/31 Golden Square, London, W.1. Seats: 1,324”

The 1938 *Cinema Buyers’ Guide* also gave the seating as 1,324.

An article which appeared in *The Scotsman*, Saturday, April 1st 1961, stated that it was to close on Saturday, April 8th 1961. It had been a very popular cinema which catered for the Gorgie and Shandon districts of the city. A spokesman for the ABC chain said that low admissions made it uneconomic to continue.

S Saturday, 18 May 1963

“Lyceum Bingo Club Burned Down The Lyceum Bingo Club was burned down early today. It closed down as a picture house in April 1961. It changed ownership to ABC in 1936. It seated 800.”

S Saturday, 9 November 1963 STOP PRESS **“Bingo Club Fire** Fire swept Lyceum Bingo Club, Slateford Road, Edinburgh, early this morning. Fire engines, five in all, raced to the scene. This was the second fire in a year at the club.”

ED Saturday, 9 November 1963 “Bingo Fire. Damage £15,000.”

POOLES ROXY, GORGIE

ED Friday, 17 December 1937 Preliminary advertisement
**“A CINEMA THAT WILL SET A NEW STANDARD IN
LUXURY, COMFORT AND EQUIPMENT
POOLE’S ROXY, GORGIE ROAD
OPENS MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, AT 5.30 p.m.”**

EN Saturday, 18 December 1937
**“COLOUR AT POOLE’S ROXY, GORGIE.
OPENING MONDAY FIRST AT 5.30 P.M.
On Visiting The Roxy, Edinburgh Filmgoers Will See A Revolution
In Cinema Lighting And Decoration
Showing Monday – Tuesday – and Wednesday
JAMES STEWART SIMONE SIMON
IN *SEVENTH HEAVEN*
AND DICK FORAN in *SUNDAY ROUND-UP* (TECHNICOLOR)
POPEYE CARTOON BRITISH MOVIE NEWS
FROM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 21,
CONTINUOUS, 2 p.m. – 10.40 p.m.”**

ED Monday, 20 December 1937 Photograph
The caption under the photograph reads: “Edinburgh’s latest cinema, Poole’s Roxy, Gorgie, which opens to-night.” The picture shows a state of urgency and bustle. The pavement in front of the main entrance is in chaotic condition, with piles of paving stones in heaps, awaiting to be laid. Builders’ barrows and material collected ready to be taken away.

Above the entrance is a huge banner bearing these words, "SEVENTH HEAVEN, starring JAMES STEWART." Two painters are seen perched on ladders putting the finishing touches to the long sign space which advertises the current attraction.

ED Friday, 29 May 29th 1953

"CITY CAN SEE QUEEN ON WIDE SCREEN Edinburgh will have Scotland's first wide-screen installation. On Monday, June 8, (1953) the Poole's Roxy, Gorgie, will introduce the new system to coincide with the showing of the colour film *Coronation Day*.

The approximate dimension of the new screen will be 35 feet wide, 17 feet 10 inches high, with a 2 feet curvature. The system, by the use of the short focus lens, increased light illumination, and a new metallic sprayed silver curved screen, enables enlargement of up to 50 per cent. in screen width. It claims several advantages.

First, there is an illusion of depth without the audience having to wear glasses; next, there is a panoramic effect giving added realism, particularly in outdoor subjects; and last, special projectors are not required.

Mr **J.K. Stafford Poole**, the managing director of the cinema, states that experiments carried out some weeks ago revealed that this cinema's modern design and equipment enabled the wide screen to be installed with the minimum of difficulty. This is particularly marked in regard to the sight lines of the audience.

In the *Empire, Leicester Square, London*, where the system was first introduced, no less than 500 seats had to be sacrificed owing to the change over. No seats will be lost at the Roxy. (This explains the differences in seating capacity when figures for 1915 or 1938 are compared with the 1954 Kine.Year Book).

Mr Poole states that all future films will be presented on the wide screen and the small standard one will be dispensed with. Film programmes following June 8th 1953 have been arranged so that the maximum number of outdoor films can be seen"

S Monday, 8 June 8th 1953 Film Notices

Newspapermen were invited to an Edinburgh cinema, the Roxy in Gorgie, to see the wide-screen. The impression one gets on entering the auditorium is that the screen now takes up the whole of the **Fourth Wall**. There is a certain loss at the top and bottom of the frame; and this can also be observed on the Monseigneur News Theatre in Princes Street, where a wide-screen has been installed, but the overall effect, especially in panoramic shots, is to give the film-goer an even greater sense of participation. He is, so to speak, drawn into the picture itself.

In spite of crudities, the wide screen has apparently come to stay, and when films are designed specifically for it we should have that heightened sense of realism which promises to be part, at least, of the cinema's answer to television”

EN Monday, 8 June 1953 Excerpt

“CORONATION FILM TRY-OUT OF ROXY WIDE SCREEN

Work on the new installation was begun shortly after the final flat screen performance on Saturday, 6th June **1953**, and it was completed in time for a preview of *Coronation Day*, a twenty minute feature, last night.”

Poole's Office, Synod Hall, Castle Terrace, informed me that Poole's Roxy would show its last picture performance on Saturday, December 7th **1963** and that from Monday, December 9th 1963 the theatre would become a **Bingo Club**. It was not known whether the house would revert to pictures.

The effect of the *Roxy* and the *County*, Wauchope Avenue, going over to Bingo during the last quarter of **1963** is to reduce the 'active' Picture Houses in Edinburgh to 19.

“BUFFALO BILL”, COL. WM. FREDERICK CODY

EN Monday, 8 August 1904

‘ “BUFFALO BILL”, COL. WM. FREDERICK CODY

ONE WEEK ONLY EDINBURGH, AUGUST 8th TO 13th

GORGIE ROAD - NEAR GORGIE STATION

**BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST AND CONGRESS OF ROUGH
RIDERS OF THE WORLD HEADED AND PERSONALLY
INTRODUCED BY COL. W. F. CODY "BUFFALO BILL"
CARTER, THE COWBOY CYCLIST IN HIS AERIAL 'LEAP
THROUGH SPACE'
'BUFFALO BILL', THE MASTER EXPONENT OF HORSEBACK
MARKSMANSHIP, IN HIS WONDERFUL EXHIBITION OF
SHOOTING WHILE GALLOPING A HORSE
100 NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS
GENUINE 'BLANKET RED MEN', CHIEFS, WARRIORS, BUCKS,
SQUAWS & PAPOOSES
TYPICAL SCENES OF WESTERN BORDER LIFE
THE DEADWOOD STAGE COACH 'HOLD UP', PONY EXPRESS
VIRGINIA REEL ON HORSEBACK, ROPING WILD HORSES,
BUCKING BRONCOS
ONSLAUGHT UPON AN EMIGRANT TRAIN
AMERICAN MARKSMEN
INDIAN PASTIMES AND WAR DANCES.
IMPERIAL JAPANESE TROUPE
THRILLING HISTORICAL SPECTACLE OF SAVAGE WARFARE
- THE BATTLE OF TYE LITTLE BIG HORN, OR, 'CUSTER'S
LAST STAND'**

**TWO PERFORMANCES DAILY, RAIN OR SHINE
AFTERNOONS AT 2 - EVENINGS AT 8.
DOORS OPEN AT 1 AND 7 P.M.
PRICES OF ADMISSION: 1s.; 2s.; 3s.; 4s. BOX SEATS: 5s., & 7s.6d.
CHILDREN UNDER 10 YEARS HALF-PRICE TO ALL EXCEPT 1s.
SEATS.
TICKETS AT ALL PRICES ON SALE AT THE GROUNDS AT
HOURS OF OPENING, AND TICKETS 4s., 5s. AND 7s.6d. ON SALE
DAILY FROM 9 A.M. UNTIL 5 P.M. AT WOOD & CO., PIANO
WAREHOUSE, 49 GEORGE STREET"**

EN Friday, 12 August 1904

**"SPECIAL NOTICE Special trains on the N.B.R. run to and from
GORGIE STATION"**

From an old programme in the Edinburgh Room, Central Library:
“Col. Cody was born in Iowa on February 26th 1846. He died in Denver on January 10th 1917. He last appeared in Edinburgh in 1904.”

The *News* in answer to a query stated that close to 140,000 saw his 1904 show when he visited Gorgie Road.

Chief Superintendent **Robert Cribbes**, C.I.D., told me, “Buffalo Bill left a Winchester rifle in St Cuthbert’s Stables, Grove Street, where his circus ‘stood in equipage’.”

EDINBURGH ICE RINK, 53 HAYMARKET TERRACE

EN Wednesday, 24 January 1912

“EDINBURGH ICE RINK HAYMARKET REAL ICE

The largest ice-rink in the United Kingdom will be opened by Lord **Balfour of Burleigh**, K.T., on Saturday, the 3rd February, 1912. Sir **Archibald Buchan**, Bart., Chairman of the Directors, will preside. A curling match will take place and an exhibition of skating given. Admission to the opening, 3s.

The rink will be open to the public for skating the same evening between 6.30 p.m. and 10 p.m. Charges: Pavilion, 1s., Ice 2s.

Tickets for the opening are procurable from Messrs R. and R. Anderson, Managers, 101 Princes Street and Messrs Thornton & Co.

A Curling Club has been formed. Those desirous of joining will kindly communicate with A. J. Simpson, S.S.C., 36 George Street.”

EN February 7th 1947

“EDINBURGH SKATERS MUST WAIT

It will probably be several years yet, according to Mr **George Tomlinson**, the Minister of Works, before *Murrayfield Ice Rink* in Edinburgh is derequisitioned. The *Haymarket* may be available in the near future as it has been derequisitioned by the Admiralty, though some time must pass before opening to the public, as a six-foot deep concrete floor, which covered the freezing pipes, will require to be removed.”

C O R S T O R P H I N E A N D M U R R A Y F I E L D

ASTORIA, MANSE ROAD

EN Wednesday, 1 January 1930 Advertisement

**“CORSTORPHINE TALKS ABOUT THAT BEAUTIFUL THEATRE
THE ASTORIA Will be opened to-day at 2 p.m.**

With the Wonderful 100 per cent “Talkie”

Movietone Follies of 1929

All Singing, Dancing and Talking Review

By the Gracious Permission of the Directors of the *Capitol Picture House*, Leith, we have secured the services of MR LYNDON LAIRD the famous Solo Organist, of London, Montreal, New York, to give the opening Interlude on our Grand Organ at 2 p.m. on January 1st at the above Theatre.

Note the Prices: 6d. ; 9d. and 1s.2d.”

I append some extracts from the brochure: *The Creators of the Astoria*,

Mr T. Bowhill Gibson, F.R.I.A.S. The Architect by whom the Astoria was designed and whose supervision this fine structure has been erected, is a specialist in Cinema and Theatre work. He was also responsible for the planning of the *Regent*, Abbeymount, *The Blue Halls*, (just about to be opened), *The Rutland* Super Cinema in the West End of Edinburgh (Canning Street).

Mr F.R. Graham-Yooll The Big Man Behind The Astoria

A man associated with the successful entertainment enterprises (The three cinemas mentioned in the previous paragraph, for example), the *Marine Gardens* in 1909, and other cinemas throughout the town.

Mr Arthur Albin The Manager of the Astoria has been successfully associated with the cinema for a number of years. He was manager of the *Regent* at Abbeymount since its inception (Monday 1st August 1927) which theatre, under his skilful control, ranked as one of the most popular houses in Edinburgh. He will now take over both the Astoria and The Blue Halls (both Talkie Cinemas); a heavy responsibility, which will enable him to further develop his capacity for establishing success.

It is less than twelve months ago that Mr F.R. Graham-Yooll and several other business men met together to discuss the prospect of building a new cinema theatre in Corstorphine. Things moved quickly; a site was found in the main thoroughfare at Manse Road, and now the Astoria, one of the most beautiful picture houses in Edinburgh or elsewhere, is in being. If Keats was right about a 'thing of beauty', then the Astoria is 'a joy for ever.'

A note of comfort is struck in the orange-coloured velvet coverings of the seats, and the thick crimson carpet that covers the floor. Most important of all, from every one of the 1,369 seats, there are 946 stalls and 423 balcony seats, a perfect view of the screen is had. The stage, which is 36 feet by 10 feet, is suitable for small turns or prologues to films, and on each side are small dressing rooms.

The Men Who Made This Beautiful Theatre Possible

Who are the men who made this beautiful theatre possible? Who were the craftsmen responsible for the work? The Principal men behind the venture are; Mr **F.R.Graham-Yooll**, who is managing director; Mr **Robert Black** of Roslin and Mr **Arthur Ingram** of Gorgie. The legal advisers were Messrs **W.J. Burness** W.S. and the Secretaries, Messrs **D. and F. Marshall and Anderson**, C.A., both of Edinburgh; Mr **T. Bowhill Gibson**, F.R.I.A.S., who was responsible for the design and carrying out of the contract, in which he was most ably assisted by Mr **Alexander Mennie**, Master of Works. The quantity surveyors, Messrs **Murray and Baird**, F.F.S., prepared the schedule of quantities and measured up the contract.

The Principal Contractors On The Job

Excavator Work: Messrs Fisher Brothers, Haymarket; Mason Work: Messrs Arnot McLeod & Co, Edinburgh; Steel Work: Redpath, Brown & Co, St Andrew Steel Works, Edinburgh; Joiner Work: Cochrane Brothers, Bo'ness; Plaster Work: Mr William Graham, 113 St Leonard Street, Edinburgh; Decorative Work: Jenners Ltd., Princes Street in co-operation with Messrs Hugh Muirhead and Son, Leith; Electric Installation: A.& T. Shand & Co., George Street

The Proscenium Wherein The Organ Is Played

The whole of one end of the theatre is occupied by the proscenium, which is in the form of two arches, one within the other.

In the curved wall of the intervening space in which the lighting effects play there is placed the fine organ, designed and constructed by Messrs Ingram &

Co., Saughton Avenue, Edinburgh, which has been built on the **unit** system. Although slightly smaller, this organ is similar to the popular instrument in the *Capitol Theatre*, Leith.

The organ has a complete range of all cinema effects: cathedral chimes; harp; xylophone; drums; traps, etc. and the action is electric throughout.

The **talking system** is **Western Electric**, and the operating room, rewinding room, talkie battery room, non-synchronising room, and the electrical switch room occupy the space of the whole width of the building, and are situated above the balcony, on the outside wall, from which, at each end, is a private stair leading to the street. Thus the perfect safety of the audience is ensured.”

The Cinema Organ The Organ – Church, Cinema or Concert Hall, has been my favourite musical instrument and I consider the article given below, to be the finest it has been my pleasure to read on the subject of the organ. It was extracted from the Astoria handbook:

“It is a difficult matter to satisfy everyone’s taste, especially in the matter of entertainment. There are a few who will deny the appeal of the organ. Indeed, one of the greatest musical treats is to hear an organ played by a master. The following facts may, therefore, be of interest to the seeker after knowledge.

The first organ was built in **678** A.D. by a monk in a Swiss monastery, who conceived the idea of adapting keyboard control by a system of coupling to them the common enough instrument known as the bagpipes.

Through course of time various improvements were effected, until the advent of pneumatic power. With the advance of electricity as a power unit, it was only to be expected that thoughts were directed towards the application to the organ. It was not until the year **1885**, however, that the first really successful electrical organ was built.

Mr **Hilborne Roosevelt**, a wealthy New Yorker and incidentally a cousin of the famous President, an ardent organ enthusiast, had an electric unit organ erected in the Garden City Cathedral, New York. It was a success, but it did not revolutionise the industry as its full possibilities were not appreciated.

Some years later, a Mr **Robert Hope Jones**, organist at Birkenhead Parish Church, by profession a telephonist, tried to interest organ builders in this country in a stunt electric organ of his own conception. Meeting with no success here, he went to America, and succeeded in interesting **Wurlitzer**, the founder of the famous firm of that name in the idea. With the advent of the movies and the advance in cinema construction, the electric unit organ, with its numerous effects, came into its own as the one instrument capable of providing musical atmosphere of all shades so necessary for successful film exhibition.

Electric Organ Is Made In Three Separate Parts Or Sections An electric organ is made in three separate sections: the console, and the voice (the pipes etc.) connected with the coupling system. This last may be said to be the soul of the organ. The greatest care has to be observed in its construction, especially as concerns the selection of the woods for the framework. They must be thoroughly seasoned.

The Wiring Then, the wiring: every note and effect has its own complete circuit, and an idea of the magnitude of the task of assembling can be gained from this: the Astoria organ alone has 12 miles of fine electric wire in its coupling system.

Takes Months To Build An organ takes months to build, and great care has to be taken that the acoustic properties of a building are such that they will give the best results according to the power of the installation. This can only be guaranteed by the expert in organ construction. Small wonder, considering all this, that the unit organ is so expensive, some of them running into many thousands of pounds.

King Of Instruments The average 2-3 manual electric cinema organ runs to £2,000 to £3,000, but who can fail to respond to its soul-stirring descriptive accompaniment to a good star picture (Silent Picture) in the silence and comfort of our luxurious cinemas. Surely it is worth it, and the showmen of the world have realised it.

The “Voice” of the “King of Instruments” has come into its own to stay.”

As I write in October **1963**, I am making an effort to have the Astoria and other brochures sent to one of the Edinburgh Libraries for reference.

Alas, the “king” lost his “Voice”. Indeed, he has lost his “Crown” and the Cinema organ is no longer heard in the land. The “King” followed the Cinema ‘Orchestras’ into oblivion.

True, some Cinema Orchestras merely consisted of a piano and the pianist would change the tune and tempo to suit the action of the picture. For galloping horses the ivories would thump out- thumpity-thump; and for the sad picture, a ‘weepy’ was played. My goodness, if anyone in the picture business earned a salary it was the lassie at the piano.

The ‘big’ picture houses, like *Pooler’s* and the *New*, Princes Street, had ‘slap-up’ orchestras. It was accepted that an interlude of 20 minutes or thereby was devoted to patrons’ requests.

Both Organ and Orchestras have *Gone With the Wind*.

A Cinema Manager on the Organ

In the month of October **1962**, a Cinema Manager was being quizzed on a B.B.C. TV programme- no name mentioned on Auntie B.B.C.- regarding the non-use of the Cinema organ. The manager said, *inter alia*, “The organ is played about four times a year – and only for special occasions at that.”

Extract from *Astoria Monthly Review No.7 July 1931*

“Proprietors: The Corstorphine Picture House Ltd.

Managing Director: Mr F.R. Graham-Yooll. General Manager: Mr A.S. Albin. Resident Manager: Mr J.W.M.D.Young

Performances are continuous from 6 p.m.; Saturdays from 2 p.m.

Prices of Admission: Balcony, 1s.2d.; Stalls, 9d.; Front Stalls, 6d. Children Half-Price. 1,369 seats

CAR PARKING ADJOINING THEATRE”

I have happy memories of the Astoria. Every Friday evening was a must for my wife and two sons for a year or two after the opening. Happy Days.

[Around 1931 I paid my first visit to the cinema, to see and hear **Janet Gaynor** in *Sunny Side Up* in the Astoria. The theme song of the film *Keep Your Sunny Side Up, Up* was often sung by my mother; today (2000) I can still whistle the tune, but can remember only the first line of the song. G.F.B.]

Extract from **1954** *Kinematograph Year Book*, pages 415-416

“Astoria, Manse Road, Corstorphine Picture House Ltd.

Prices: 1s. to 2s.1d. Seats 1,368

Proscenium, 37 feet; Screen, 22 feet; 2 Dressing Rooms”

S Thursday, 19 December **1963**

“Cinema Pioneer Helps Festival Appeal fund benefits from legacy

A former cinema owner, Mr **Louis Dickson**, who died more than two years ago, has left £61,181, the bulk of which, after death duties, will go to the *Edinburgh Festival Society* to assist a special appeal fund launched in **1960**.

Mr Dickson, a pioneer of the cinema and of cinematography in Scotland and proprietor of the Astoria Picture House (Corstorphine), directed in his will that the major part of his capital should go to the fund which was started a few months before his death.

The appeal fund was launched with the intention of bringing the Society an income of £50,000 a year. To raise this, the sum of £1 million would have to be invested at an interest rate of 5 per cent. Revenue would be used to enlarge the Festival’s range and artistic standard. It is believed that the Mr Dickson’s bequest is the largest single donation yet made to the fund”

The following extract from *The Scotsman*, Thursday, February 16th **1961**, has some relevance to the death of Mr Dickson. “*New Tivoli* , Edinburgh, will be taken over by **J.B. Milne Theatres**, Dundee from Monday (February 20th **1961**) The Milne Company already own two Edinburgh Cinemas, the *Tudor*, Stockbridge, and the *Astoria*, Corstorphine, both acquired last year (1960). The J.B.Milne Chain now own 29 cinemas. They range from Lerwick to Galashiels.”

BERTRAM MILLS' CIRCUS

EN Saturday, 16 July 1932, Page 8, under the 'The Passing Show'

“BERTRAM MILLS' CIRCUS MURRAYFIELD SCOTTISH RUGBY UNION GROUND

Edinburgh is to have a visit for a fortnight beginning on Tuesday, of Mr Bertram Mills' famous circus and menagerie from Olympia, London. A new location for such a show has been obtained in the parking ground behind the grandstand of the Scottish Rugby Union ground at Murrayfield, and the only entrance will be by the bridge over the Water of Leith at Murrayfield Road. Upon the ground a huge marquee is to be erected to give accommodation to 4,000 spectators.

Included in the programme are **Mcrowzkowski's Lippizaner Arab stallions**, **Mathie's** eleven tigers, **Power's** dancing elephants, the greatest thrill of the century, the **Wallenda's High Wire Act**, the **Millimetre Girls**, Red Indian and Mexican riders, a rodeo, congress of International Clowns and **Augustes Manzano** the Spanish High School rider and toreador. These are only part of the aggregation that Bertram Mills has assembled for the tour. It is the most magnificently equipped circus that has ever visited these parts.

Performances are to be given daily at 4.45 and 8 o'clock, but the menagerie will be open to visitors daily from 10 till 4, and after each performance Miss **Peggy Solomon's** lion cubs from Central Africa will be on view, and in his private tent, **Zaro Agha**, aged 156, will hold daily receptions. Two special trains and 700 lorries will be required to bring the show and staff from Newcastle. This will be the **first visit of the circus to Scotland** and the Lord Provost, Sir **Thomas B. Whitson**, is to be at the opening on Tuesday, July 19th 1932”

EN Tuesday, 19 July 1932

**“NOW OPEN EDINBURGH ROSEBURN
SCOTTISH RUGBY UNION GROUND
POSITIVELY 2 WEEKS ONLY TO JULY 30TH
BERTRAM MILLS' CIRCUS AND MENAGERIE
FROM OLYMPIA LONDON
TWICE DAILY AT 4.45 AND 8 p.m.
SATURDAY JULY 30th only, at 2.30 and 6.30 p.m.**

**MENAGERIE OPEN DAILY FROM 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
AND AFTER EACH PERFORMANCE
DON'T MISS SEEING ZARO AGHA THE WORLD'S OLDEST
LIVING MAN**

PRICES OF ADMISSION: 1s.3d, 2s.6d., 3s.9d., 5s. and 7s.6d.

7s.6d. and 5s. seats may be booked in advance on the Ground or by telephone (Edinburgh 61438). Also from Methven Simpson Ltd., 83 Princes Street, Edinburgh ('Phone Edinburgh 21271, 3 lines); and Messrs. Paterson Sons & Co. Ltd., 27 George Street, Edinburgh ('Phone Edinburgh 23797)''

EN Friday, 29 July 1932 Turret Window

“The Circus After a highly successful visit, Mr Bertram Mills' Circus at Murrayfield closes tomorrow, when there will be performances at 2.30 and 6.30. The next place to be visited is Dundee. Mr Mills is greatly gratified with the appreciation shown by the Edinburgh public. St Giles.”

BERTRAM MILLS' CIRCUS

S Wednesday, 1 June 1938

**“BERTRAM MILLS' CIRCUS
SCOTTISH RUGBY UNION FOOTBALL GROUND
MURRAYFIELD CIRCUS FOR EDINBURGH**

The Edinburgh Magistrates yesterday sanctioned the holding of a circus in the car park of the Rugby ground, by Bertram Mills' Touring Circus from July 17th to July 30th, and the opening of the premises to the public on Sundays, so that the public might see the horses and other animals.”

AMERICAN ROLLER SKATING RINK

EN Monday, 27 July 1908

**“AMERICAN ROLLER SKATING RINK, RUSSELL ROAD,
MURRAYFIELD**

EDINBURGH’S NEWEST AMUSEMENT

HIGH-CLASS ROLLER SKATING

MILITARY BAND FREE TUITION

AFTERNOON TEAS FREE CLOAKROOMS

30,000 SQUARE FEET OF SKATING SURFACE

THE LARGEST, SMOOTHEST, AND BEST IN THE WORLD

SAMUEL WINSLOW 1908 MODEL STEEL WHEEL,

BALL BEARING SKATES USED EXCLUSIVELY

THREE SESSIONS DAILY

MORNINGS: 10 – 12; ADMISSION FREE; SKATES 1s.

AFTERNOONS: 2-5; ADMISSION 6d.; SKATES 1s.

EVENINGS: 7 – 10; ADMISSION 1s. SKATES 1s.

Ladies free at afternoon session

INVITATION OPENING FRIDAY NIGHT, JULY 31

DAILY SESSIONS BEGIN SATURDAY, AUGUST 1st 1908”

EN Tuesday, 4 August 1908 Extract

“This form of sport has gone well with the management of the American Roller Skating Co. Naturally enough, some time will be required before people ‘cotton on’ to the game properly. The only difficulty seems to be a want of a sufficient supply of young ladies. Miss **Daisy Davis**, of Pittsburg, whose gyrations are a delight of the companyher skating is the essence of all that is beautiful in movement.”

EN Tuesday, 5 October 1909

“Managing Directors: C.P. Crawford & F. A. Wilkins”

EN Monday, 9 November 1908

“AMERICAN ROLLER SKATING RINK

RUSSELL ROAD, MURRAYFIELD

THREE SESSIONS DAILY

GRAND SKATING CINDERELLA

TUESDAY NOVEMBER 10th 1908

ALL SKATERS MUST BE IN EVENING DRESS

ADMISSION 1s.”

MURRAYFIELD ICE RINK

EN Saturday, 12 June 1937

“The first press report of the rink coming into existence appeared in the above issue of the News and was billed “Edinburgh to get ‘The World’s Fastest Game’, to cost £80,000.”

EN Monday, 3 January 1938

“NEW ICE PROJECT S.R.U. OFFER SITE AT MURRAYFIELD

It will be remembered that various possible sites have been suggested in connection with the project, including Meadowbank, the Marine Gardens, the Gymnasium ground, the home ground of St. Bernard’s F.C., and Balgreen Road.”

S Tuesday, 4 January 1938

“PROMOTERS SECURE OPTION ON GROUND AT MURRAYFIELD

The president of the S.R.U., Mr **A. A. Lawrie**, confirmed the report anent granting an option for the provision in Edinburgh of a sports stadium with facilities for ice-hockey, boxing contests and other recreations. The S.R.U. to provide facilities for the parking of motor cars.”

S Monday, 17 January 1938

“THE PROPOSED ICE-HOCKEY STADIUM AT MURRAYFIELD

The building will have seating for 5,700 persons. The surface area will be 200 feet by 100 feet. The project is being promoted by Edinburgh businessmen who will form a company to raise £75,000 of capital to be divided into ordinary shares of 5s. each.

The architects for the scheme are Messrs Dunn & Martin.”

ED Tuesday, 25 January 1938

“THIRD ICE HOCKEY STADIUM FOR EDINBURGH SITE NEAR MEADOWBANK ...it is believed that steps are being taken to build a stadium in the Meadowbank area. Last week, plans for rival rinks at Murrayfield and Balgreen were published....

PLAYERS’ PROBLEM The question of obtaining a sufficient number of first-class players is likely to be a real problem. The third stadium, it is

understood, will have seating for 8,000 spectators and to attract enthusiasts from Portobello, Leith and the surrounding district.”

S Thursday, 3 March 1938

“MURRAYFIELD SCHEME SANCTIONED.”

ED Friday, 8 April 1938

“TOWN COUNCIL REJECTS CORSTORPHINE SCHEME (BALGREEN) After a keen debate the proposal was defeated by 36 votes to 7.”

EN Saturday, 6 June 1938

“ICE STADIUM - £60,000 SCHEME AT MURRAYFIELD AMENDED PLANS Amended plans for the ice rink at the S.R.U. ground were passed by Lord Dean of Guild Court, W.W. Finlayson presiding. The seating accommodation being reduced from 5,700 to 4,000 – the area of the building being slightly reduced.”

ED Tuesday, 8 November 1938

Shows a photograph of the ice rink in course of construction.

ED Thursday, 10 August 1939

Shows a photograph of the ice rink virtually completed.

The stadium was due to open on September 15th 1939, but was requisitioned by the Government on the outbreak of War on 3rd September 1939. The building was used as a N.A.A.F.I. store until 1942; thereafter it was used by H.M. Stationery Office until 1951.

S Friday, 2 August 1952

“The first ice-hockey match, **Murrayfield Royals** versus **Falkirk Lions**, will take place on September 19th. In normal circumstances, it is intended that there will be ice-hockey every Monday night; six sessions of curling each week; and skating every day. There will be 1,200 pairs of skates (attached to boots) for hiring. The rink will be open on Sundays for club members only. It will have a restaurant, a milk-bar, and for members of the *Murrayfield Ice Rink Club*, a licensed lounge.”

S Thursday, 8 August 1952

“NEW ICE RINK OPENED IN EDINBURGH Such perseverance deserved success, said Lord Provost **James Miller**, when he opened the Murrayfield Ice Rink, Edinburgh, yesterday; and referred to the difficulties that had beset the concern for the past 13 years.

The Lord Provost cut a white tape across the main entrance of the handsome building which seats 4,500 spectators. Mr **H.H.Leslie**, vice chairman of the company, presided at a short ceremony. Later in the afternoon a full-dress rehearsal was held of the *Rose Marie On Ice* show which will be playing at Murrayfield for the next four weeks, and which opens tonight.”

EN Saturday, 30 June 1956

“MURRAYFIELD ICE RINK IS PUT UP FOR SALE This decision was taken by the shareholders less than four years after the belated official opening of the rink. The company was registered in July **1938**, and the rink was due to be opened on September 15th **1939**, but the premises were requisitioned by the Government from the outbreak of War on September 3rd **1939**, first for use as a N.A.F.F.I. store until **1942**, and from then until **1951** by H.M. Stationery Office.”

EN Tuesday, 16 October 1956

“SKATING AGAIN AT MURRAYFIELD ICE RINK The building was put up for sale in June of this year but it is understood that no suitable offer was received.

The stadium has been rented by Mr **Alaistair Walker**, C.A., Edinburgh, for the coming winter until next March.”

P I L T O N

EMBASSY, BOSWALL PARKWAY, PILTON, GRANTON

EN Monday, 27 August 1937.

**“OPENING TODAY AT 5.30
THE EMBASSY BOSWALL PARKWAY, PILTON, EDINBURGH
(5 MINUTES FROM WEST END)
‘BUS NO. 19, QUEENSFERRY STREET**

**Myrna Loy, Spencer Tracy, Jean Harlow, William Powell
in *Libelled Lady***

Also 20 minutes of ‘Popeye’ in Colour, etc.

Continuous from 5.30. Wednesdays and Saturdays, from 2.0

Prices: Front Stalls, 6d.; Stalls, 9d., Balcony, 1s.

**Afternoon Prices, Wednesdays and Saturdays: 4d. & 6d.
No Half-Price”**

1954 *Kinematograph Year Book* Pages 416-416

“Embassy, Boswall Parkway, Granton
Proprietor: Granton Cinema Co. Ltd., 5 Coates Place, Edinburgh.
Seats: 1,500. Proscenium, 36 feet. Stage, 15 feet deep. Screen, 25 feet by
19 feet. Two Dressing Rooms. Prices: 1s. to 2s. 3d.”

I had the pleasure of meeting the Manageress of the Embassy, Mrs **Haig**, on Thursday, October 11th **1962**. It was from her chief projectionist that I received the loan of the **1915** Kinematograph Year Book.

As a result of a fire, the seating was reduced to 1,350.

STOCKBRIDGE AND CANONMILLS

Stockbridge, Stockaree, is on the Northern edge of the New Town. Its neighbour to the East is Canonmills. The name 'St. Bernard' figures prominently in both places: Stockbridge with its St. Bernard's Bridge, Picture Palace, Row and Well; and Canonmills with its erstwhile football team, St. Bernard's, which closed down during the 1939-1945 War.

Although only five minutes from Princes Street according to the Grand Picture House's opening advertisement, the area had, and has, an identity of its own.

ST. STEPHEN STREET SITE

ANDERSON'S ICE RINK, ST. STEPHEN'S STREET

[“At the east end of St Stephen Street ... is the curved red sandstone frontage of the large and unsuccessful skating rink designed in 1895 by Peter L. Henderson and converted to a theatre in 1899-1901 by T.P. Marwick, who heightened the elevation” *The Buildings of Scotland Edinburgh* by John Gifford, Colin McWilliam and David Walker; Penguin Books, 1984.

Anderson's life span was of short duration, like the **Grand Rink** in Fountainbridge which opened in August **1909**, but had become the **Coliseum Picture House** by December **1911**. G.F.B.]

Extract from *First Electricity Test Book*, March 13th **1898**:
“**ANDERSON'S ICE RINK, ST. STEPHEN'S STREET**”

TIVOLI THEATRE, ST. STEPHEN STREET, STOCKBRIDGE

EN Saturday, 9 November **1901**

“**TIVOLI THEATRE, ST STEPHEN STREET, STOCKBRIDGE**

Lessee **Mr Weldon Watts**

WILL OPEN ON MONDAY NEXT, NOVEMBER 11th 1901

With C. and F. Renad's World Famous Comedy *The Swiss Express*

The theatre is constructed on the most modern up to date and improved lines, lighted and ventilated throughout by Electricity. Also perfect Hearing System.

Will be run on first-class lines at Popular Prices.

Absolutely one of the Safest Theatres in the Country.

Doors Open at 7 o'clock. Commence at 7.30. (Early Doors – 6.30)”

EN Tuesday, 12 November 1901

“Popular Prices: 2s.; 1s.; and 6d. Half Price at 9 o'clock
Seats can be booked at the Theatre, 10 till 3.”

GRAND THEATRE, ST. STEPHEN STREET

News Advice, Thursday, December 20th **1956**

Question: “...I have been informed that the **Grand Picture House**, St Stephen Street, was once a theatre, and that **Florrie Ford** played the Principal Part in the Pantomime *Cinderella*.”

Reply: “The **Grand Theatre** was opened on Saturday, December 10th **1904**, with the pantomime *Cinderella*. Principal parts were played by Miss **May Martin**; Miss **Millie Englet**, Miss **Fanny Wright**, Miss **Vera Schlesinger**. Miss **Florrie Ford** did not appear in that Pantomime. Before being opened as the **Grand Cinema** on January 1st **1921***, the building was used as a *Riding Academy*.” *opened on Friday, December 31st **1920**, at 6 o'clock.

“It was”, continued the Reply, “opened in November, **1901** (no actual date given) as the **Tivoli**. On Saturday, April 12th **1902**, the theatre was closed for redecoration. It re-opened on Monday, July 28th **1902**, for twice-nightly performances. The early show was from 7 to 9, and the late show between 9 and 10.45.

Artistes on the re-opening Bill were: Nishihama Matson Group of Japanese Jugglers; Harry Bold; Bros. Huxter; Charles T. Crawford; Adeline and Lucy; Mons D'Musto; Clothilde's Performing Cockatoos; and Bonnie Goodwin and her Piccaninnies.

Prices of Admission: 1s.; 6d.; and 3d.”

THE GRAND PICTURE HOUSE, ST STEPHEN STREET,

EN Monday, 27 December 1920

***“THE GRAND PICTURE HOUSE ST STEPHEN STREET,
STOCKBRIDGE (FIVE MINUTES FROM PRINCES STREET)***

TO BE OPENED AS A FIRST-CLASS, UP-TO-DATE SUPER-CINEMA.
With a Double Feature Continuous Programme of the World’s Latest and
Best Pictures

ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 31ST 1920, AT 6 O’CLOCK

Watch Papers for Full Particulars re Programmes, etc.”

EN 31 December 1920

“THE GRAND

Orchestral Music under the personal direction of Mr Tom C. Miller

The Vengeance of Durand – 7 parts – featuring Alice Joyce

Bill Apperson’s Boy – 5 Reels – featuring Jack Pickford”

1954 Kinematograph Year Book, pages 415-416

Grand, St Stephen Street, Edinburgh

Proprietor: Grand (Stockbridge), Ltd., 144 Renfield Street, Glasgow.

Seats: 1,650”

Mr **George Webster** was manager of the ***Roxburgh Picture House*** in Drummond Street, from the Spring of **1922** until December **1923**. He was the manager of the ***Grand, Stockbridge***, from January **1924** until May **1944**, when he left to become manager of ***The State Picture House***, Great Junction Street, and is there as I write on July 16th 1963 [the author’s 70th birthday]. He is the longest serving Cinema Manager in Edinburgh.

EN Tuesday, 24 May 1960

The ***Grand Cinema***, Stockbridge, was among a list of cinemas which had closed. Others in that category were: ***Alhambra, Carlton and Beverley***.

C I N E M A S

DEAN STREET SITE

Two ‘houses’ were situated at 28 Dean Street: *The Pavilion Picture House*, 27 March 1917; and *Dean Picture House*, 10 May 1930

PAVILION PICTURE HOUSE, 28 DEAN STREET

Mr **James Cousins** was, in his younger days, associated with the Picture House business and was manager of the Laurie Street Picture House and assistant manager in the Alhambra, Leith Walk, during its early days. Naturally, one in the ‘business’, any business, knows what’s cracking all round the town; in this respect Mr Cousins told me two weeks before he died on Monday, September 30th 1963 that he remembered a picture house in Dean Street, Stockbridge, which had been a church. Mr Cousins was able to pinpoint the year as 1912, because he was 20 years of age when he and some others entered the church to tidy it up. He remembered clearing out a number of Bibles.

I could not find any trace of the Dean Street Picture House in the advertisement columns of the Press for the year 1912. It did, however, show up in 1917, which lends credence to Mr Cousin’s story.

OLD THEATRES

The following appeared in the Turret Widow of the *News*, Thursday, April 6th 1961:

“You would notice in the Post Bag the other day a letter pointing out that Edinburgh’s *Pavilion Theatre*, where actor **Finlay Currie** made his first stage appearance, was not in Stockbridge but in Grove Street. It is not difficult, of course, to confuse these old entertainment houses, many of which changed their names frequently down the years. In Dean Street, Stockbridge, there was indeed a Pavilion - the *Piv* (the writer of the Turret Window spelled it *Pav*) as it was affectionately known – where cinema and stage shows were produced.”

I acknowledge with thanks the above item, which very materially furthers the History of the Cinema.

EN Tuesday, 27 March 1917 The first advertisement for the cinema that I came across:

“PAVILION PICTURE HOUSE

28 DEAN STREET, STOCKBRIDGE 7 AND 9

THEDA BARA in *KREUTZER ZONATA*
Founded on LEO TOLSTOY’S masterpiece

Supported by Latest Comedies and Topicals

POPULAR PRICES: 2½d., 5d. & 7d.”

1938 *Cinema Buyers’ Guide* Page 173
“Pavilion, Dean Street, Stockbridge.
Seats: 900. Closed.”

THE DEAN PICTURE HOUSE, 28 DEAN STREET, STOCKBRIDGE

EN Saturday, 10 May 1930

***“THE DEAN PICTURE HOUSE, 28 DEAN STREET STOCKBRIDGE
OPENING ON MONDAY FIRST***

ALL RECONDITIONED AND REDECORATED
BEST PICTURES JAZZ ORCHESTRA
EXCELLENT OPENING PROGRAMME

MONDAY – TUESDAY – WEDNESDAY

JACK HOLT IN THE SUPER PICTURE

SUBMARINE A PICTURE WHICH TALKS FOR ITSELF

ALSO *BEWARE OF BACHELORS* WITH AUDREY FERRIS

THURSDAY - FRIDAY – SATURDAY

ABIE’S IRISH ROSE WITH CHARLES ROGERS & NANCY CARROLL

Prices: 3d., 4d., 6d. Saturdays: 4d., 5d., 6d.”

GRAND CINEMA See St Stephen Street site

PALLADIUM, 38 RAEBURN PLACE

This is one of the very few 'houses' for which I could not trace an advertisement in the Press; however the *News*, Tuesday September 28th 1909, carried an advertisement for 38 Raeburn Place:

“NORTHERN ROLLER SKATING RINK

Men, each session, 6d. and 1s.

Ladies, each session, 6d. and 9d.”

This confirms that the premises were used as a place of entertainment. The following item shows that it had become a cinema by 1915, but just when the change from roller skating to cinema took place I cannot say.

1915 *Kinematograph Year Book* Page 468

“Palladium, Raeburn Place.

Proprietor: R.C.Buchanan.”

At that time Mr Buchanan was Treasurer of Edinburgh Corporation.

The premises at 38 Raeburn Place were acquired by Woolworth's in 1962.

RITZ PICTURE HOUSE, RODNEY STREET

The Ritz Cinema is but a few yards away from the Water of Leith and historic Canonmills. The fact that it was opened in September 1929 indicates that it has 'something', call it appeal or drawing power. In any case it has been able to withstand the onslaught of many counter attractions of the last decade.

EN Tuesday, 10 September 1929

“THE RITZ RODNEY STREET

BUILT FOR TALKIES

DAILY AT 2.30 EVERY EVENING CONTINUOUS FROM 6.30 p.m.

GRAND OPENING PROGRAMME TODAY AND ALL NEXT WEEK

AL JOLSON in *THE SINGING FOOL*

PRICES: 6d., 9d., 1s. and 1s. 3d. CHILDREN: 6d and 9d.

NEXT WEEK PAULINE FREDERICK in *ON TRIAL*”

EN Tuesday, 10 September **1929**

“THE NEW RITZ CINEMA The Ritz, in Rodney Street, is the latest addition to the already long list of Edinburgh cinemas, but a distinctive feature about the building is that it is the first picture house erected in the city designed for nothing but talking films. There will be **no silent productions**. The step the directors have taken is a courageous one, but there is little doubt success will be met with.

The new cinema is, in interior decoration, designed on somewhat futuristic colours, and the effect is exceedingly bright. A new and somewhat novel system of lighting enhances the colouring.

Built to seat nearly 2,000, every chair is of ‘tip-up’ character, and the same pattern in all portions of the cinema, and the seating arrangement permits of an unobstructed view from any section.

The floors are heavily carpeted in order to ensure no interference with the presentation of the talking and sound films and one finds extreme purity of tone in the transmission.”

1938 *Cinema Buyers’ Guide* Page 173

“Ritz, Rodney Street

Proprietor: Scottish Cine and Variety Theatres Ltd.

Seats: 2,030 ”

1954 *Kinematograph Year Book* Pages 415-416

“Ritz, Rodney Street

Proprietor: Associated British Cinema Ltd., 30/31 Golden Square, London W.1. Seats: 1,923”

ST BERNARD'S ROW, DEANHAUGH STREET

The following 'houses' were situated at St Bernard's Row: *Palace Picture House*, April 10th 1911; *St Bernard's Picture Palace*, April 15th 1912; *Savoy*, Monday March 28th 1921; *Tudor*, Wednesday, July 25th 1960 and is still open for business as at November 1963.

PALACE PICTURE HOUSE, ST BERNARD'S ROW, DEANHAUGH STREET (TOP OF ST BERNARD'S ROW)

EN Monday, 10 April 1911

"PALACE PICTURE HOUSE

NOW OPEN HIGH CLASS ANIMATED PICTURES

TWICE NIGHTLY AT 7 and 9 p.m.

MATINEES EVERY SATURDAY AT 2 and 4 p.m.

POPULAR PRICES: 3d., 4d. and 6d."

EN Tuesday, 11 April 1911

"STOCKBRIDGE PICTURE HOUSE The demand for the picture house entertainment remains as keen as ever in Edinburgh, and the latest addition to the many is to be found in Deanhaugh Street, Stockbridge, where an up-to-date theatre has been opened.

Special flooring The building embraces several novel features, the flooring being specially constructed to allow of anyone having an uninterrupted view of the films on the 'screen'.

This week's programme is a splendidly varied and interesting one, and includes the *Forest Ranger*, a tale of cowboy life, *Foolshead In The Bank*, another of the well known series, and the *International At Ibrox, Scotland v. England*, which is being shown for the first time in Edinburgh."

It appears that 'fitba' canny be kept out of the 'picture'; in this case the picture on the screen. The 'goggle box' on TV has nothing on the Old Time Movie.

***ST BERNARD'S PICTURE PALACE, ST BERNARD'S ROW,
DEANHAUGH STREET, STOCKBRIDGE***

EN Friday, 12 April 1912

“ST BERNARD'S PICTURE PALACE

**ST BERNARD'S ROW - DEANHAUGH STREET STOCKBRIDGE
GRAND RE-OPENING ON MONDAY, 15th APRIL 1912**

With up-to-date Series of **FIRST CLASS** and Interesting Pictures

Orchestra will render Selections during the Performance.

PRICES: 2d., 3d. & 4d.”

EN Tuesday, 16 April 1912

“St Bernard's Picture Palace at Deanhaugh Street, had a successful re-opening last night, being well patronised at both houses (not mentioned in the advertisement).”

Star Film: *A Blind Man's Dog*, - *Red X Martyr* and *Waiting At The Church*”

SAVOY PICTURE HOUSE, ST BERNARD'S ROW

EN Monday, 28 March 1921

**“THE SAVOY PICTURE HOUSE ST BERNARD'S ROW -
STOCKBRIDGE**

FORMAL OPENING TODAY AT 3 p.m. by

THE RIGHT HON. LORD PROVOST CHESSER

D.W.GRIFFITH'S MASTERPIECE *HEARTS OF THE WORLD*

The Greatest Picture Ever Screened

AND ALL WEEK AT 6.30 and 8.30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY MATINEE at 3.

PRICES (INCLUDING TAX) : 8d., 1s., 1s. 6d. and 2s. 4d. RESERVED

BOOK SEATS AT TOWNSEND & THOMSON'S,
MUSICSELLERS, 79 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH”

EN Tuesday, 24 May 1960

“The manager of the Savoy Cinema, Stockbridge, has disclosed that only a few days ago the owners of the Savoy cancelled plans to close the cinema. The Savoy will remain open indefinitely.”

But, within 2 months the Savoy closed; see under *Tudor*.

TUDOR, ST BERNARD'S ROW, STOCKBRIDGE

The Tudor is the fourth picture house which has occupied the site since the Palace Picture House opened there on Monday April 10th 1911. In 1960 it was touch and go whether a cinema would continue on the site, with the Savoy closing in the middle of that year; but the Tudor is still in business as at December 1963. Thus, there has been a cinema on this site for over 52 years.

EN Monday, 18 July 1960

***“TUDOR – STOCKBRIDGE FORMERLY SAVOY
CLOSED for REDECORATION
and the Instalment of CINEMASCOPE EQUIPMENT
RE-OPENING ON MONDAY, JULY 25, 1960”***

EN Monday, 25 July 1960

***“TUDOR - STOCKBRIDGE
DORIS DAY & ROCK HUDSON in
PILLOW TALK (A) SCOPE COLOR
JEFF CHANDLER in SIGN OF A PAGAN”***

WESLEY HALL, HAMILTON PLACE, 1911

EN Saturday, 21 October 1911

“Wesley Hall, Hamilton Place

Tonight at 8

Attractive Cinematograph and Concert

Admission: 2d., 3d., and 4d.”

This entry may, at some distant time, settle a bone of contention.

CIRCUSES AND SHOWGROUNDS

BATTY'S GREAT LONDON CIRCUS

EC Tuesday, 30 May **1876**

**“BATTY'S GREAT LONDON CIRCUS
ROYAL GYMNASIUM GROUNDS (PITT STREET, EDINBURGH)
PRICES: 3s.; 2s.; 1s. and 6d.”**

BOSTOCK AND WOMBWELL'S CARNIVAL, ROYAL GYMNASIUM

EN Monday, 29 January **1900**

**“CARNIVAL ROYAL GYMNASIUM
PITT STREET, EDINBURGH ADMISSION FREE”**

THE SCOTTISH CATERERS' CARNIVAL

EN Monday, 15 December **1902**

**“THE SCOTTISH CATERERS' CARNIVAL
PINDER'S ROYAL CIRCUS, LOGIE GREEN, EDINBURGH”**

Note: I remember **Logie Green** from the first decade of the 1900's until the start of the First World War, after which I had other interests to occupy my time. It was the home ground of one of the local football teams, possibly Leith Athletic, as St. Bernard's played at the Royal Gymnasium.

The Logie Green ground, long since a housing scheme, was off Broughton Road. Close by was **Powderhall Ground**, which was opened on 1st January **1870**, and is used mainly for greyhound racing as at March **1964**.

ARTICLES ON THE GYMNASIUM IN “WORLD'S FAIR” AND BY COUNCILLOR W. McLAREN

I met Mrs **Cora Ledingham**, grand-daughter of John Henry Cooke, on 14 January **1963**, when she gave me a number of press cuttings about Circuses.

Among them was a cutting about the *Royal Gymnasium*, which appeared in *The World's Fair*, April 24th 1937.

“Many of our older readers who were resident in the Scottish Capital or who, in the course of their business paid frequent visits to that city during the latter part of the last century, will doubtless retain happy memories of its round of shows and entertainments.

Outside and inside amusements in those days were in plenty and all the Fun of the Fair, be it said, was relished to the full by all classes of people.”

Regarding those old-time shows, no one wrote more intimately than Councillor **Wilson McLaren**, and a lengthy but interesting article on this subject appeared in the *Weekly Scotsman* [possibly in 1937, soon after *The World's Fair* article G.F.B.], ‘Edinburgh’s Old Time Amusements: Councillor McLaren’s Happy Memories’. His write-up on the Gymnasium follows; the article was extracted by ‘Marbell’.

“Even in Stockbridge district in those days all the fun of the fair carried on merrily. This amusement park was situated in Pitt Street and is now known as the Gymnasium, the home of the St. Bernard’s Football Club.

A POPULAR GYMNASIUM

In 1865, Mr **Robert Cox** (glue and hide works, Gorgie Mills) who subsequently became M.P. for South Edinburgh, conceived the idea of constructing a recreation ground at Fettes Row extending to Pitt Street and the Scotland Street tunnel. It was titled the *Royal Patent Gymnasium*, the object being to give amusement and instruction to the people. It was opened by the Lord Provost **Charles Lawson** on 6th April.

The new place of amusement had many attractions, and it did not fail to draw the crowd. The principal attraction was the *Great Sea Serpent*, a rotary boat seating 600 persons. Other novelties were the *Giant Sea –Saw*. It was familiarly known as *Chang* after the Chinese Giant of that name. This iron cage measured 100 feet long by seven feet wide. It held 200 persons and rose to a height of 50 feet. There was no mechanical power to work this fearsome object with its freight of young human beings. Its movement was entirely by gravity and boy and girl power.

Saturday afternoons and summer evenings always found the showground crowded. An outstanding attraction was the *Velocipede*. Made of iron, the

machine had heavy wooden wheels and iron tyres! It was better known as the 'boneshaker'. Even in wintertimes, the gym was not deserted. The circular pond on which the *Great Sea Serpent* floated, when bearing gave facilities for skating and both sexes were always out in force till late at night. Viewed from a distance it was a weird sight, the ground being lit by a number of flares.

Auld Reekie is no stranger to Christmas and New Year open-air carnivals with their many up-to-date stunts; but for innocent and healthy amusement, the old Gymnasium would be hard to beat

'Marbell' concluded, "Still anon, the writer ('Marbell') has never lost interest in showland and many amusement caterers and circus proprietors have in the Councillor a real and true friend. Long may he be with us! MARBELL"

Councillor McLaren died on January 31st **1944**, aged 83.

HAPPY MEMORIES OF THE GYMNASIUM

I have happy memories of the old Gymnasium during the years **1900-1906**. It was there that football teams from the Public Schools, or Board Schools (as they were named till **1918**, I think) met to compete for the Inspector's Cup and other cups and trophies. I am happy to record that the Inspector's Cup is still being competed for in **1964**. The final now takes place at the Warriston Playing Fields.

I remember seeing a football match at the Gymnasium between St Bernard's and Albion Rovers on Saturday, February 21st **1920**; the score was 1-1.

Note: The King George V playing fields now occupy this site.

THE OLD GYMNASIUM GRANDSTAND

As the wind carries seeds long and short distances, so do building workers on occasions uproot and transplant various types of structures. In this case the grandstand of the old Gymnasium was moved and re-erected at Old Meadowbank in **1947**.

SKATING RINKS

EDINBURGH SKATING RINK

S Saturday, 18 August 1883

“EDINBURGH SKATING RINK

OPEN EVERY SATURDAY EVENING,

WITH GOOD BAND AT 6.30

ADMISSION 3d.; SKATES, 3d.

ICE RINK CURLING RINK, PERTH STREET”

[*Encyclopaedia Britannica*: The first rink with artificially frozen ice, a private one, the Glaciarium, was opened in London in **1876**, and throughout the century larger and public rinks with artificially produced ice appeared.]

Extract from *First Electricity Test Book*, March 13th **1898**

“ANDERSON’S ICE RINK, ST. STEPHEN’S STREET”

The rink became the *Tivoli Theatre* in **1901**: see St. Stephen Street Site.

ROYAL GYMNASIUM

EC Monday, 1 January 1877

“ROYAL GYMNASIUM ROLLER SKATING”

NORTHERN ROLLER SKATING RINK, 38 RAEBURN PLACE

EN Tuesday, 28 September 1909

“NORTHERN ROLLER SKATING RINK

Men, each session, 6d. and 1s.

Ladies, each session, 6d. and 9d.”

A B B E Y H I L L A N D P I E R S H I L L

PICTUREDROME, 14 EASTER ROAD

Mr Palmer the bookbinder in the Central Library, George IV Bridge, knew I was writing this history and asked to see what I had written about the *Picturedrome*. When he handed the script back to me he remarked, "Every patron got a welcome from one or other of the brothers Black who stood at the top of the steps at both 'houses'. It was nice to look back on those days." Mr Palmer stayed round the corner from the *Drome*. That the owner **Alex. Black** was a nice person to know will show up as the story unfolds.

EN Friday, 30 August 1912

"PICTUREDROME TOP OF EASTER ROAD

GRAND OPENING Beautifully Decorated, Artistically Lit

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 1912

ALL THE LATEST FILMS

PRICES: 2d., 4d. and 6d.

PICTURES INCLUDE:

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, ANGEL UNAWARES & BLIND MINER"

EN Tuesday, 10 September 1912

"Although the Picturedrome at Easter Road has been opened for a week it has taken a place in public favour..."

EN Monday, 11 August 1913

"PICTUREDROME GRAND RE-OPENING TO-NIGHT

PRICES: 2d., 4d. and 6d."

EN Tuesday, 12 August 1913

"PICTUREDROME RE-OPENED

After being closed for four weeks the Picturedrome, Easter Road, opened its doors again last night. The hall has been practically re-built, and the seating accommodation doubled, the capacity now being 600 visitors. Electric fans have been installed, the decorative scheme is tasteful, and altogether the Picturedrome now is a cosy and thoroughly up-to-date house.

The attendance last night was very gratifying, when a strong programme was submitted with *The Counterfeiter*.”

1915 Kinematograph Year Book Page 468

“Picturedrome, 14 Easter Road.

Proprietor: A. Black Seats: 850.”

These details also appear in the **1938 Cinema Buyers’ Guide**.

In conversation with Mr **George Webster**, manager of the *State* Picture House, Leith, on Tuesday, October 30th **1962**, he told me about a good deed performed by Alex Black. Mr Black left somewhere in the region of £75,000, out of which he directed a sum of money was to provide a life-boat in memory of his wife. A Beautiful Thought.

I enquired of the Royal National Life-Boat Institution, Life-Boat House, 42 Grosvenor Gardens, London S.W.1, in November **1962**, and was informed by the Institution: “I am able to confirm that she is named *Margaret* and was sent to her station in **1959**. The late Alexander Black, to whom you referred, left a generous legacy to the Institution which was appropriated towards the cost of a new life-boat for Scotland, in accordance with the deceased’s wishes, and the life-boat was in fact allocated to the Dunbar station.”

We frequently hear or read about certain people and how they dissipate money. It gives me great pleasure to record what one man did in memory of his wife and his practical help for his comrades who go down to the sea in ships and who face peril every time they do so.

LAST PICTUREDROME ADVERTISEMENT

EN Saturday, 15 May 1943

“PICTUREDROME 2 - TO - 10.15

WALLACE BEERY, *JACKASS MAIL*

BERNARD NEDELL, *TERROR ON TIPTOE*

MONDAY – JEANETTE McDONALD, *I MARRIED AN ANGEL (U)*

JACK BUCHANAN, *IN THE MIDDLE WATCH*”

On Monday, 17th May **1943** the name of the Picture House, 14 Easter Road was changed to *Eastway*.

EASTWAY, EASTER ROAD

EN Monday, 17 May 1943

**“EASTWAY (FORMERLY THE PICTURE DROME)
TOP OF EASTER ROAD
FIRST PROGRAMME
JEANETTE McDONALD & NELSON EDDY in
I MARRIED AN ANGEL (U)
JACK BUCHANAN in *THE MIDDLE WATCH* (U)
AND FULL SUPPORTING PROGRAMME”**

1954 *Kinematograph Year Book* Pages 415 –416

“The Eastway, Easter Road

Proprietor: George Palmer, Associated Gaumont British Cinemas, 149 West George Street, Glasgow.

Seats: 875. Proscenium Width, 30 feet. Prices: 1s. and 1s.9d.”

The *Eastway* was converted into a supermarket around 1962.

REGENT PICTURE HOUSE. 12 ABBEY MOUNT

Search as I did for an hour or two over the period when the *Regent* was opened on Monday, August 1st 1927, and prior to its opening, I did not come across any write-up anent the cinema; however, the brochure which was issued on the occasion of the opening of the *Astoria*, Corstorphine, on Wednesday, January 1st 1930, contained some useful information about the Regent and the relevant information will bear repeating. I am glad to say the cinema is still open as at November 1963.

The architect responsible for the design and erection of the Regent was Mr **T. Bowhill Gibson**, F.R.I.A.S., who was also involved in the Blue Halls, Rutland and Dominion.

Mr **Fred. R. Graham-Yooll**, was the big man behind the Regent, Blue Halls, Rutland and St Andrew Square. He also played a part in the setting up of the Marine Gardens, Seafield Road, which opened in 1909. In his day Mr Graham-Yooll did much to bring amusements, of a varied character, to the citizens of Edinburgh and their country cousins from the Lothians and further afield.

Mr **Arthur Albin** was the manager of the Regent from its date of opening until he took over responsibility for the Astoria and Blue Halls, which both opened on 1 January **1930**. Under Mr Albin's skilful control, the Regent ranked as one of the most popular houses in Edinburgh. During the long period I was engaged in gathering material for this history I met a number of cinema managers, all of whom thought highly of Mr Albin.

EN Wednesday, 27 July **1927**

"THE REGENT PICTURE HOUSE

ABBAY MOUNT OFF REGENT ROAD

Will Be Opened To The Public On MONDAY, 1 AUGUST 1927

RONALD COLEMAN & VILMA BANKY IN

THE DARK ANGEL

And

HAROLD LLOYD in *FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE*

Continuous Every Evening From 5.45 p.m.

PRICES: FRONT STALLS, 4d.; BACK STALLS, 6d.;

BALCONY, 8d.; CIRCLE, 1s.

It Will be Worth Your While To Visit The Regent Picture House"

EN Tuesday, 29 April **1930**

"THE REGENT SUPER TALKIES

ALL TALKING MUSICAL DRAMA

THE DELIGHTFUL ROGUE

OPENING OF THE 'COMPTON' ORGAN (Recognised By Experts To Be The Finest Organ In The World) BY LESLIE JAMES The Popular London Organist, of H.M.V. Record Fame, Who Will Give Special Music Interludes At Every Performance.

PRICES:

MATINEES till 4.30 STALLS, 3d., CIRCLE & BALCONY, 6d.

EVENING: STALLS, 4d & 6d., CIRCLE 1s., BALCONY, 8d."

EN Saturday, 26 April **1930** **"AMONG THE FILMS** In the Regent Cinema, Abbey Mount, the John Compton Organ Company have installed an organ which has been specially designed for the Gaumont British Company. It is the first Compton organ in Scotland, and it is claimed to have very special qualities for a cinema theatre.

The organ will be in use on Monday (April 28th 1930) and for the opening week recitals are to be given by Mr **Leslie James**, one of the most popular of cinema organists. Mr **Richard Telfer**, who will be the regular organist, has been in the St Andrew Square Picture House.”

Note: “Among The Films”, was one of the several Press columns which contained useful pieces of information on the Cinema; all very welcome.

1938 *Cinema Buyers' Guide* Page 173

“Regent, Abbey Mount

Proprietor: General Theatre Corporation Ltd. Seating: 1,765”

1954 *Kinematograph Year Book* Pages 415-416

“Regent, Abbey Mount

Proprietor: Management Association Ltd., Albion House, 59 New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1 Prices: 1s.6d. to 2s.3d.”

In the respective Year Books for the years 1915, 1938 and 1954, several changes can be detected, but are not noticed in our weekly visits to the cinema over the years: 1. Changes of Proprietor; 2. Reduction in seating accommodation, brought about by the Large Screen; 3. The inevitable increase in prices.

CARLTON, PIERSHILL

EN Wednesday, 18 December 1935

“THE CARLTON SUPER CINEMA PIERSHILL EDINBURGH

GRAND OPENING PROGRAMME

MONDAY FIRST, DECEMBER 23rd , at 2.30 p.m.

BY BAILLIE TOM STEVENSON

DICK POWELL in *GOLD DIGGERS OF 1935 (A)*

And JOSEPHINE HUTCHISON in *THE SACRED FLAME*

Prices: 6d., 9d., 1s. All Including Tax”

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

“Carlton Cinema, Piershill. Proprietor: Edinburgh Cinema Properties Ltd.
Seating: 1,509”

EN Friday, 27 February 1959

“Another Edinburgh Cinema is to close. Edinburgh is to lose another cinema, the *Carlton* in Piershill, which was built in 1935. It is being closed because of the falling off in attendances. The *Carlton* has a seating capacity of 1,400 and the notice advertising the sale stated that it is suitable for conversion to a factory, garage or business premises. It has a floor space of 12,000 square feet and a large car park at the rear.

Councillor **Robert Mc Laughlin**, a director of the cinema, told the Evening News today: “We are closing for the same reason as many other cinemas throughout the country. Business started falling off after the war (1939-45) but there has been a very big drop in the past 12 months. Public habits have changed and many people have moved out of this area to new housing schemes. The cinema could easily be adapted for other purposes. The floor space is unusually large for a cinema.”

Upset Price £25,000 The upset price asked for the *Carlton* is £25,000. Councillor McLaughlin said that its closing date was uncertain but it was likely to stay open for several more weeks. He wanted to keep the cinema open until a buyer had been found.

Other Edinburgh Cinemas Closed In Recent Years

In recent years several cinemas have closed in Edinburgh. These included: the *Palace*, 15 Princes Street; the *New Picture House*, 56 Princes Street; *St Andrew Square Cinema*, Clyde Street, destroyed by fire; the *New Palace Cinema*, High Street; and the *Alhambra*, Leith Walk.”

Bell & Co (Transport) Ltd. Soon after the *Carlton Cinema* closed Messrs Bell made extensive alterations and took possession during 1960. [In the 1970's the site was obtained by Safeway for a supermarket. When Safeway extended their premises in **1993** my wife and I saw the last vestige of the *Carlton Cinema*, part of the terrazzo at the entrance to the cinema's doorway, being covered with earth by gardeners who were planting shrubs opposite the pedestrian crossing in Piersfield Terrace. G.F.B.]

CODONA CONQUERS EDINBURGH

EN Thursday, 1 January 1931

“CODONA CONQUERS EDINBURGH

MEADOWBANK ABBEYHILL

**With the Largest and Most Spacious CARNIVAL Ever staged in the
Capital**

EDINBURGH’S NEW AMUSEMENT PARK

MEADOWBANK ABBEYHILL

CONTINUING TILL 10th JAN.

CHARGE FOR ADMISSION 3d.

CHILDREN ADMITTED FREE - ACCOMPANIED BY PARENTS

OPENING 10 a.m. THUR, FRIDAY & SATURDAY

FIGURE RAILWAY - NOAH’S ARK

WALL OF DEATH - ROYAL GRAND CIRCUS

DARE-DEVIL PEGGY

VISIT THE PEOPLE’S SHOW

10 OF BRITAIN’S LARGEST ROUNDABOUTS”

WHITE’S ANNUAL CARNIVAL

EN Monday, 9 December 1938

**“WHITE’S ANNUAL CARNIVAL MILTON STREET, ABBEYHILL
ADMISSION FREE”**

D U D D I N G S T O N

THE SKATING CLUB, EDINBURGH, ESTABLISHED 1744

The following extracts are from a book about *The Skating Club, Edinburgh*, held by the Edinburgh Room. It provides an unexpected and delightful introduction to an ancient Edinburgh pastime, which still flourishes, but under more congenial (?) if somewhat artificial conditions, as I write in March 1964, 220 years after the Club was formed.

“THE SKATING CLUB, EDINBURGH ESTABLISHED 1744 PATRON: HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE ALBERT

President: GEORGE MORE

Vice-president: JAMES MACKNIGHT

Council: LORD COCKBURN, SIR GEORGE CLERK, Bart., SIR ROBERT KEITH DICK CUNYGHAM, Bart., WILLIAM WOOD, WILLIAM DOUNE GILLON, GEORGE GILLON, JAMES G. THOMSON, JOHN RICHARDSON, J. L. WOODMAN, WILLIAM S. ELLIOT, Dr. CHARLES M. KER.

Secretary: ARCHIBALD W. GOLDIE

Skate-maker: J. SIMPSON, South Bridge. Officer: J. MACKAY

This Club has had enrolled among its Members many of the nobility, judges and eminent men of the land; all of whom, however, without distinction of rank, were required to go through regular trials of their qualifications on the ice, before they could be admitted as Members; no one being allowed to enter who is not a good skater and able to take part in all movements and evolutions of the Club.

All the Members of the Club use skates of a uniform make. They are immovably fixed to boots made for the purpose, which lace in front.”

Advertisement at end of book:

“**SKATES** At **Young’s** well-known Cutlery Establishment, 79 Prince’s Street, Edinburgh – Gentlemen in search of a good pair of skates can be supplied with all the various patterns of that article, from the most approved **Boot Mounted Skates** down to the cheapest article made for beginners. All sizes of boys' skates always on hand.

A. Young begs respectfully to inform the Public that he has been duly appointed Skate Master to the Edinburgh Skating Club: it having only been ascertained, after the early sheets of the preceding Work had gone to Press, that there was a vacancy by the removal of Mr Simpson from this neighbourhood to another sphere of business.”

“THE SKATER’S MONITOR, INSTRUCTOR AND EVENING COMPANION EDINBURGH: JOHN MENZIES, 61 PRINCE’S STREET, 1846. Printed by G. MOIR, ST.ANDREW STREET, EDINBURGH

PREFACE Pages v and vi

Any excellence in the art that I am said to possess, is to be referred entirely to my obedience to the rules found in the annexed dialogue; and were they widely known among skaters, it is not unlikely but an immediate improvement would follow. My escape from accident and immersion, is also to be referred to strict attention to the warnings unfolded in the scenes within.

The humorous tale of *Tom Tickle*, a London impostor, is introduced in the hope that it may impress on the minds of the young, a moral truth, viz.: “Look to your first wrong step.”

It is with trembling then, that I send away this little craft on the mind’s ever glorious sea, with its prow bearing for that haven, where ride in security, and undecaying radiance many a stately vessel: there float the Franklin and Washington – the Shakespeare and Newton – the Scott and Burns – the Burke and Sheridan – and a countless fleet with flags blazoning as they flutter at their lofty heights! and as they wave, mingle into a canopy of a thousand hues!

The skiff carries a few atoms of the ore of truth, in the form of Instructions on the Art of Skating; a Humorous Moral Tale; Anecdotes; Warnings for all who frequent the Ice, practically treated in Scenes on the Serpentine; and its Company are *Lieutenant Gleam, Albert, Tom Tickle, and Walter Dove.*

EDINBURGH 20th October 1846”

“In wintertime it is on Duddingston Loch that skating is practised as an art by the Edinburgh Club. The author of the *Book of Days* commented, ‘skating exhibitions which he saw there early in the present century, when Henry Cockburn, and the philanthropist James Simpson, were conspicuous ...The scene of that loch in ‘full bearing’ on a clear winter day, with its busy and stirring multitude of sliders, skaters and curlers, the snowy hills around glistening in the sun, the ring of the ice, the shouts of the careering youths, the rattle of the curling-stones, and the shouts of the players, once heard and seen, would never be forgotten.’ ”

CRAIGMILLAR

RIO PICTURE HOUSE, WAUCHOPE AVENUE

EN Saturday, 1 February 1936

**“TO ANNOUNCE THE OPENING OF THE
RIO SUPER CINEMA, WAUCHOPE AVENUE, CRAIGMILLAR
BUSES 2 AND 6 TO THE DOOR
ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, AT 2 p.m.**

**SUPER HEATING
SUPER SOUND SYSTEM
SUPER VENTILATING SYSTEM
SUPER SEATS
AND SUPER PROGRAMMES**

**DICK POWELL & RUBY KEELER IN *FLIRTATION WALK*
AND EDWARD G. ROBINSON IN *PASSPORT TO FAME*
FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENT ON WEDNESDAY”**

EN Wednesday, 5 February 1936

**“THE RIO SUPER CINEMA WILL BE OPENED ON
THURSDAY, 6th FEBRUARY, AT 2 p.m.
BY THE GREAT SCOTTISH COMEDIAN MR HARRY GORDON
(With The Kind Permission of the Management of the THEATRE
ROYAL, EDINBURGH)
ENORMOUS OPENING PROGRAMME (AS STATED IN PREVIOUS
ADVERT.)”**

No prices of admission were given in the advertisements. I did not find any criticism in the Tuesday Column of the News regarding the opening of the cinema.

1938 *Cinema Buyers' Guide* Page 173

“Rio, Wauchope Avenue, Craigmillar.

Proprietor: Mrs M.E. Broadhurst.

Seats: 1,100”

ED Saturday, 5 October 1946 Excerpt

“The Rio Cinema, Craigmillar, was gutted by a fire which broke out early this morning. The Edinburgh National Fire Service state that it was the most rapid and spectacular blaze tackled by them since the *Theatre Royal* fire on March 30 1946.

A constable first noticed the outbreak at 2.15 this morning and immediately ‘phoned the fire service at Lauriston Place. Engines from Angle Park and London Road were also rushed to the scene and Commander W.B.Muir, O.B.E., was in charge. The projection box suffered no damage. Stalls, circle and gallery were completely destroyed.”

We hear no more about the Wauchope Avenue cinema until the opening of the *County* in August 1950.

COUNTY, WAUCHOPE AVENUE, CRAIGMILLAR

In the autumn of 1962 I took the trouble to pay a visit to the owner of the County, who traded under the name of Mr **Paulo**, but whose name I believe was Mr **Butcher**. Under no circumstances would any member of the family give information about the cinema which is adjacent to a grocer’s shop. Mr Butcher was the only cinema owner who refused to give me any information. However, I got the ‘gen’ necessary to put it on the map. The intervention of the fire caused a four year gap, which took me three hours to track to its source.

EN Tuesday, 29 August 29th 1950

“County, Craigmillar

Matinee Daily 1.30 Evenings Continuous from 5.0

Robert Paige in *Red Stallion* (U) (In Colour)

Donald O’Connor in *Feudin’, Fussin’ and A’Fightin’* ”

In 1962 the County became a dual purpose house, that is, two nights for Bingo; the other nights for pictures. The County went over to Bingo full-time during October-November 1963.

ARE CIRCUSES ON THE WAY OUT IN EDINBURGH?

The first reference to Circuses in this history is to Messrs **Jones and Parker, 1788**, in Part 6 Princes Street and The Top of The Walk, under the Broughton Street Site, and the last piece of information I gathered about a circus was about Chipperfield's, which appeared at Pilrig Park during September **1963** (Part 3 Leith). Thus, circuses have been presented to the population of Edinburgh for their entertainment for at least 175 years. Will a circus appear in Edinburgh in 1964-65, or any other year? Time will tell, but the cold mitt send-off by certain Edinburgh councillors in September 1963 to Chipperfield's Circus would seem to indicate that CIRCUSES ARE NOT WELCOME IN EDINBURGH ANYMORE.

I am glad it fell to my lot to put on record the history of Edinburgh Amusements, especially the section dealing with Circuses. I endeavoured to name every circus which appeared in Edinburgh, i.e. those that were advertised in the Press. If, however, some have been omitted, my plea is – it is unfortunate. I did my best to bring before the citizens of MY BELOVED CITY – EDINBURY – some of the delights I experienced, firstly in Cooke's Circus, East Fountainbridge when I was a child; and, in turn, later circuses with my family.

Like Theatre People, Circus People have always been at the top of the queue, ready and willing to give freely of their services on behalf of any deserving cause.

And so I say farewell to the Sawdust Ring of my childhood days; I understand that the Sawdust Ring has been superseded by Non Dust floor coverings.

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